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**Surname Analysis, Distant Reading, and Migrant Experience: The Irish in London, 1801-1820.**

Crymble, Adam

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# **Surname Analysis, Distant Reading, and Migrant Experience: The Irish in London, 1801-1820.**

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Departments of History & Digital Humanities, School of Arts and Humanities.

King's College London, University of London

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## Abstract

After English internal migrants, the Irish were the largest group to relocate to London in the early nineteenth century. This thesis explores the experiences of the Irish communities in London at this oft-overlooked point in the Irish diaspora's past.

The work is split into two parts. The first of these parts focuses on understanding who the Irish were and what it meant to be 'Irish' in the early nineteenth century. It also explores what cues contemporaries used to identify the Irish in London during these two decades, and how those cues were different from those that can be used by historians. The goal of this first section is to determine the best way for historians to identify Irish individuals in sets of historical records. This would make it possible to do comparative analyses of the Irish and non-Irish in the city. Ultimately this can be achieved through three processes: nominal record linkage (finding archival evidence of an individual's Irish connection), keyword searching for Irish geographical terms, and a surname analysis. The surname analysis was based upon a study of 278,000 records from the census of 1841, and validated against thousands of records from 1778-1805, to determine the most reliable surnames. This surname analysis resulted in the creation of a tool (Appendix I), which I argue can be used by historians to identify probable Irish individuals when no other evidence is available.

This digital humanities tool was then tested through a series of historical case studies to determine its value for historians. The case studies involved an examination of Irish defendants in the *Old Bailey Proceedings*, which highlights how the local population reacted to the Irish when interpersonal conflicts occurred. The *Proceedings* contain abridged transcripts of the trials of all 25,000 defendants tried for felonies in London during this period. Using the census analysis, I was able to identify 1,700 'probable Irish' defendants. I then conducted data mining and quantitative analyses that identified differences in the conflict resolution strategies used by the locals when dealing with the Irish and the non-Irish respectively.

The evidence suggests that locals were more suspicious when dealing with the Irish, and quicker to turn to the legal system when things went wrong. However, it would seem that as a group, the Irish gave cause for concern. An Irish underclass was certainly heavily involved in crime; but more importantly, Irish seasonal migration led to a dramatic increase in the city's Irish population each summer and autumn. Poor planning by government ministers also meant that mass demobilisation of Irish soldiers and sailors after the wars with the French had a similar effect (particularly in 1802), unintentionally swelling the size of the Irish population in the capital. These impermanent migrants failed to adhere to the social expectations the locals had of their neighbours, thus breeding resentment. For Londoners, the transitory nature of these individuals upended traditional conflict resolution strategies.

I conclude that surname analysis can provide useful proxy evidence for historians upon which hypotheses can be generated, and theories can be tested. It is best suited to large textual corpora, and should always be supported by close reading, when possible.

## Dedication

For Angela. Who dropped everything to move to the other side of the world, just because I asked.

And for anyone who has ever been brave enough to find out what it was like to live somewhere else.

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It would seem that these dissertations do not write themselves. Neither are they the product of one person alone. I would like to acknowledge some of the people, institutions, and ideas that helped me get through this project and that helped shape it along the way.

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## Abbreviations

BL Newspapers	19 <sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers: Part II
HCP	House of Commons; Accounts and Papers, <i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
HO 26	Middlesex Criminal Registers, <i>National Archives</i> .
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
MCR	Middlesex Criminal Registers
OBP	Old Bailey Proceedings
OBPO	Old Bailey Proceedings Online (version 7.1)
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
TEI	Text Encoding Initiative
WO 116	Chelsea Out-Pensioner Books, <i>National Archives</i>
XML	Extensible Markup Language

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## Introduction

This thesis has two interrelated goals. These goals are the product of an interdisciplinary approach that combines digital humanities research with the pursuit of history, to explore how the former can aid our approaches to understanding the latter. Firstly, as a digital humanist, I wanted to understand how scholars could use new digital tools and techniques on large already-digitised historical resources. In particular, I was interested in the challenge of 'big data' and its associated methodological problem for historians: how can we identify relevant sources in textual databases that are too large for a single scholar to feasibly read and interpret each source independently, or that do not necessarily contain enough information to make their relevance clear?

And secondly, how does an improved ability to identify relevant sources change the historical questions that we can ask and the conclusions that we can draw? To answer that second question, I have focused on an extended historical case study: perceptions of the Irish (both recent immigrants and people with Irish ancestry) in early nineteenth-century London. I will discuss that case study at length in a moment; but before I do that I wanted to reflect on the first goal: tools, big data, and relevant sources.

To achieve the first goal, I have worked to develop a 'tool' that uses surname analysis to identify probable Irish individuals in digitised textual sources when traditional techniques such as nominal record linkage and keyword searching are impossible or insufficient. The tool was built from the results of a large-scale surname analysis of 278,000 London-area census records from 1841.<sup>1</sup> Like modern censuses, everyone living in England or Wales on a single night in June 1841 was recorded along with, for the first time, the person's place of birth. The entire census contains demographic details of nearly sixteen million unique individuals, of which a sample of approximately 1.5 per cent, all from the London area, were used in the construction of the tool. Like any primary source, the census has its limits as a historical record, including its underreporting of young

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<sup>1</sup> '1841 England Census [database on-line]', *Ancestry.com* (Provo, Utah: 2010).

children, and the not infrequent listing of strangers as ‘NK’ – shorthand for ‘not known’.<sup>2</sup> Despite these and other minor shortfalls, for the vast majority of people in the country, the census records delineate who was born in England and Wales (classified together), Ireland, Scotland, Foreign Parts, or the local area. For a scholar interested in finding the Irish in London, this huge set of records provides a unique insight into who was Irish.

Although I was interested in 1801 to 1820 rather than 1841, I was able to use these records to analyse each of the 58,000 unique surnames found, to identify a reusable subset of Irish root surnames that can reliably identify Irish people in early nineteenth century sources (Appendix 1). I believe this approach holds great promise for historians interested in finding the Irish in digitised textual sources.

The tool itself is a list of names, but I use the term ‘tool’ because when used appropriately by a historian as a list of search terms, it provides new functionality, just as we would expect from a tool. I have intentionally kept the tool in list-format so that it is technically sustainable (and can be printed entirely on paper in a useable format), so that it is reusable by anyone – regardless of technical aptitude, and so that it remains transparent to a scholar whose reputation depends on knowing what processes his or her research has undergone. This approach is what Fred Gibbs and Trevor Owens call ‘user-centered designs’ in digital humanities tools.<sup>3</sup> These user-centered designs seek to exterminate the ‘black box’ tools that conduct unknown analyses; good tools instead put power in the hands of the scholar who decides when and in what contexts to employ it, and ensures the user understands the value and limits of the outputs.

In constructing this tool, I have attempted to stay true to the complexity of Irish identity and Irishness in the early nineteenth century (discussed at length in

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<sup>2</sup> E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), 581-591.

<sup>3</sup> Fred Gibbs and Trevor Owens, ‘Building Better Digital Humanities Tools: Towards broader audiences and user-centred designs’, *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 6 (2012).

chapters one to four), while at the same time ensuring scholars had something tangible to use. That may sound like a contradiction in terms: building a tool for de-facto classification that considers the nuance of identity. I would call it a compromise between what we would like to have, and what it is currently possible to build. There are obvious limits to this big data approach, and one of those limits is the granularity with which decisions about individuals can be made. When classifying thousands of individuals in thousands of unique historical sources, each individual receives little personal attention. During the classification phase, in my case, most of the 25,000 individuals I focused on received only a few minutes consideration. During that brief time, I checked the details I had for them before moving on to the next. A lucky few got a much longer look. Some were not checked at all and I had to trust the algorithm, or else find myself spending the entire PhD programme cleaning data rather than analysing it. With a limited amount of attention and a semi-automated classification system, some false positives are inevitable; however this problem is faced by anyone working with an imperfect sample, and I am confident that these false positives are few enough in number that they do not undermine the results.

The list of challenges associated with this approach does not stop there. Non-standardised spellings prove tricky, as do poor quality transcriptions. It is difficult to determine if a woman's name is hers from birth or that of her husband. And while a man with an Irish surname like Murphy almost certainly has a paternal ancestral link to Ireland, it is impossible to tell when someone emigrated from Ireland based on name alone. This means a surname approach leaves scholars unable to distinguish between the London-based activities of recent immigrants and those of more established Irish families. It is partly for this reason that I have adopted a broad definition of 'Irish' in this study, to include both those who were visibly Irish by contemporary standards, and also those who were perhaps more assimilated into London life but who had Irish blood.



We must be aware of these challenges, but despite them, I believe this type of approach to large-scale resource classification is useful, and will become increasingly useful as historical corpora continue to grow, and historians opt to take on the challenge of big, messy, historical data. My validation of the 283 Irish root surnames and their variants showed that this approach can be expected to identify between thirty and forty per cent of Irish individuals with a high degree of accuracy. This is a significant improvement for those unable to identify any Irish people when traditional historical techniques fail (Chapter four). With this tool to hand, I was able to identify a substantially larger set of relevant sources to my historical case study than historians have hitherto been able to link to Irish individuals with any degree of confidence. I looked for evidence that the Irish experience in London differed from the experience of the ethnically English population. In keeping true to my interest in large already-digitised historical resources, I focused heavily on the records of the *Old Bailey Proceedings*, which were digitised as part of the *Old Bailey Online* project, and so my case studies focus on evidence of unusual patterns amongst Irish defendants.<sup>4</sup>

These crime records were freely available, could be downloaded in their entirety, and came with extensive metadata that proved to be perfect for a study of relations between the Irish and non-Irish locals. The *Proceedings* were evidence of crime and conflict; it was well known that the Irish were over-represented amongst the defendants.<sup>5</sup> The *Old Bailey Online* is one of the largest historical corpora of primary source materials ever produced, and its strengths lie in the fact that it contains all surviving copies of a particular type of resource (abridged court transcripts from the Old Bailey courthouse), making it as close to optimal for an apples-to-apples comparison over time as historians are likely to find. The project has become one of the most widely used online databases in historical research because of its reliability and ease of access.<sup>6</sup> This corpus is not the first created as part of a digitisation initiative, nor is it the latest. The list of digital

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<sup>4</sup> Tim Hitchcock, Robert Shoemaker, Clive Emsley, Sharon Howard and Jamie McLaughlin, *et al.*, *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674-1913 [hereafter OBPO]* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 7.1).

<sup>5</sup> Peter King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice. The Treatment of the Irish at the Old Bailey 1750-1825', *Journal of British Studies*, 52 (2013), 400.

<sup>6</sup> Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, 'Old Bailey Online - Publications that Cite the Old Bailey Proceedings Online', *OBPO*.

corpora includes open projects that scholars can use easily for data mining, notably *HathiTrust*, *British History Online*, and the Australian *Trove* newspaper database, and closed or partially closed resources that foreground access to a digital surrogate (page scan) and keyword searching, but do not provide access to the machine-readable text layer: *Early English Books Online*, *Google Books*, and the subscription-based *British Library Newspapers Archive*.<sup>7</sup> These and countless others are now providing massive corpora online. Looking even further back, these projects are merely extensions of the microfilmers and microfichers of the previous generation who worked to reformat original sources so that the knowledge they contained could be preserved and transported more effectively.

Digitisation is often pegged as a way for researchers to save money, as they no longer need to travel to distant archives to find materials, but these projects have also changed the way we *do* history. They allow us to keyword search what we once had to read. They provide machine-readable text that can be converted into a database, can be analysed with computers, and can have additional linked data added in order to create something bespoke to a researcher's needs. The digital nature of the records meant that it was possible to search the full text systematically; the computer is far more capable of matching words than is the human mind. Sites such as the *Old Bailey Online* also act as artifacts of historical scholarship, opening themselves up to scholarly criticism from those who critically interrogate the accuracy of the digitisation process – a hallmark of a scholarly resource. With regards to the *Old Bailey Online*, William J. Turkel applied a Naïve Bayes classifier to the material in 2008 in an effort to identify mis-classified trials.<sup>8</sup> Magnus Huber's team transformed the entire corpus by tagging all speech instances, providing one of the largest examples of spoken

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<sup>7</sup> *Early English Books Online* (ProQuest, 2003-2014), <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>; *HathiTrust* (2008-2014), <http://www.hathitrust.org>; *Google Books* (Google, 2004-2014), <http://books.google.com/>; *British Library Newspaper Archive* (British Library, 2012-2014), <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>; *Trove* (Australian National Library, 2008), <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>.

<sup>8</sup> William J. Turkel, 'A Naïve Bayesian in the Old Bailey' Parts 1-14, in *Digital History Hacks* (May 2008), <http://digitalhistoryhacks.blogspot.co.uk/2008/05/naive-bayesian-in-old-bailey-part-1.html>.

English in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> I too developed a means of identifying the 15,000-20,000 transcription errors that found their way into the finished product, by drawing together a number of English language dictionaries with common patterns of typographical errors.<sup>10</sup>

These examples are significant because they are evidence of how the digital nature of the *Old Bailey Online* has changed the way scholars can approach historical sources. The fact that the records can be shared, altered, and reshared is a dramatic shift from the punch cards of the 1970s that formed the basis of social scientific research that has influenced the historiography, but provided little in the way of data that can be shared and reused. Historians now have the opportunity to build directly upon one another's work.

For me, the *Old Bailey Online* provided an opportunity to test the benefits of data mining a large body of literary texts for a historical study, to see what we could learn about the past by analysing the corpus rather than close reading its contingent parts. To turn to a cliché, this is to look at the forest, instead of focusing on the trees. Big data has already begun to change our world. For example, Carolyn McGregor, in partnership with IBM, has used vital signals from premature babies to detect developing infections earlier by looking for changes in heart rate.<sup>11</sup> These hidden patterns are what many digital humanities scholars are interested in identifying and interpreting. This is what Katy Börner calls a 'macroscopic' approach – the opposite of the scientists' microscope. Börner argues that 'rather than make things larger or smaller, macroscopes let us observe what is at once too great, slow, or complex for the human eye and mind to notice and comprehend'.<sup>12</sup> The macroscope incorporates the *longue durée*

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<sup>9</sup> Magnus Huber, Magnus Nissel, Patrick Maiwald, Bianca Widlitzki, *The Old Bailey Corpus. Spoken English in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries* (2012), [www.uni-giessen.de/oldbaileycorpus](http://www.uni-giessen.de/oldbaileycorpus), accessed 6 April 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Adam Crymble 'Identifying and Fixing Transcription Errors in Large Corpora', in *Thoughts on Public & Digital History* (10 February 2013), <http://adamcrymble.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/identifying-and-fixing-transcription.html>.

<sup>11</sup> T. Naik, A. Thommandram, S. Fernando, N. Bressan, A. James, and C. McGregor, 'A method for a real-time novel premature infant pain profile using high rate, high volume physiological data streams', *27th International Symposium on Computer-based Medical Systems* (2014), 34-37.

<sup>12</sup> Katy Börner, 'Plug-and-play macroscopes', *Communications of the ACM*, 54 (2011), 60-69.

approach to history championed by Jo Guldi and David Armitage in *The History Manifesto* (2014), which encourages historians to tackle big questions that have only recently become possible thanks to computer assistance.<sup>13</sup> This approach is what Franco Moretti coined ‘distant reading’, to contextualise the activity as distinct from close reading.<sup>14</sup> Distant reading is an activity in which the scholar does not read the words in the order they appear on the page, but instead looks for phenomena that transcend texts and tell us something about the whole collection. The approach is characteristically quantitative, and therefore reductionist, in its attempt to make sense of a large body of material.

For a select few, the concept of taking a quantitative approach to a humanities discipline is sacrilegious. Quantification removes nuance and detail; it converts lives lived into points of data, stripped of their agency and slotted into a table or database. Done poorly, it can lead to unsupportable conclusions. For example, Fogel and Engerman’s *Time on the Cross* (1974) had some socially dubious, quantitatively derived conclusions about the experiences of American slaves, and is an easy scapegoat for those seeking to dismiss quantification (though few today would take its conclusions seriously).<sup>15</sup> Some literary scholars too object to a quantitative approach to texts. Stephen Marche’s article ‘Literature is Not Data: Against Digital Humanities’ (2012) views distant and close reading as mutually exclusive competitors. That dichotomy has more to do with the words ‘distant’ and ‘close’ than any grounding in reality. Most scholars who engage in distant reading move seamlessly between macro and micro readings of the past, seeking first and foremost to understand.

Despite these reservations, even those firmly in the qualitative camp must recognise that quantitative approaches have their place in our pursuit of understanding. Demographic and economic historians have been quantifying the past for decades. A large body of demographic work out of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, led by E.A. Wrigley and R.S.

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<sup>13</sup> Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Franco Moretti, ‘Conjectures on World Literature’, *New Left Review*, 1 (2000), 54–68.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross: Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston, 1974).

Schofield's *The Population History of England, 1541-1871* (1981), has revolutionised our understanding of who and how many people lived in early modern England, and has been used as the foundation of countless other studies.<sup>16</sup> Cormac Ó'Gráda has done a similar service to those studying demography in Ireland.<sup>17</sup> These works build upon a much longer tradition, stretching back to Gregory King's attempt to calculate the population and social structure of seventeenth century England.<sup>18</sup> Great economic histories too have used quantification for decades. Ephraim Lipson published a three-volume economic history of England in the 1930s, long before computers, and countless economic historians, right up to the present day, have built upon those and other early quantitative works.<sup>19</sup>

In many respects, digital humanities scholars interested in 'big data' or working with large digital corpora of literary texts such as the *Old Bailey Online*, seek to do very similar work to that of the demographers and economic historians. However, to this interest in a quantitative approach, I believe digital humanities scholars bring an interest in the mutability of digital data. Many of us are keen to explore the impact of our ability to change mutable data, shape it, share it, analyse it, and then feed that analysis into a new study. We can chain studies together in new ways that are much easier to accomplish thanks to the digital nature of online sources. I have attempted to take that approach: drawing on the worlds of demographers and economic historians, as well as social historians and historians of crime, but also to take an interdisciplinary approach that applies the findings of a digital humanities big-data analysis of tabular data (the census) to a historical corpus of free flowing – though admittedly formulaic – prose (the *Old Bailey Online*) that between 1801 and 1820 contains details of more than 25,000 defendants engaged in felonious disputes in London. My series of case studies explores how that digital tool informs our understanding of the

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<sup>16</sup> E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England*.

<sup>17</sup> Cormac Ó'Gráda, 'A Note on Nineteenth Century Emigration Statistics', *Population Studies* 29 (1975), 143-149; Cormac Ó'Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History 1780-1939* (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> Gregory King, *Natural and political observations and conclusions upon the state and condition of England* (1696).

<sup>19</sup> Ephraim Lipson, *The Economic History of England*, [3 vols.] (London, 1931).

Irish defendants in that lot, and how effective that analysis proves to be when tested via traditional historical methods.



The first four chapters of this thesis consider the nature of Irishness in the early nineteenth century, and provide context for problematising and constructing the tool described above, as well as the nature of the Irish living in London and how what we as historians know about them differs from what contemporaries knew. The Irish in London are the subject of a number of studies, and interest in the group has enjoyed a revival of sorts in the past few years. Though authors with an obvious twentieth-century partisan agenda plague some studies, most works provide useful critical analysis of the historical topic. *Chapter One* provides historical context for the antagonism between the Irish and English by looking at English interference in Irish affairs over the early modern era, which provides context for the historiography itself. This chapter establishes the differences between the religious groups who lived in Ireland, splitting them into a Catholic majority, a significant 'Dissenting' population (largely Presbyterian), and a privileged Protestant minority (Church of Ireland). Though Presbyterians and Church of Ireland followers are both 'Protestant', they are nearly always considered distinct in Irish historiography for historical reasons discussed in this chapter. It then discusses how these religious groups complicate the idea of an 'Irish' people.

The historiography of the Irish in London, particularly as it relates to community, crime, and poverty, extends back into near-contemporary material. The goals of Henry Mayhew in the mid-nineteenth century when he began to compile *London Labour and the London Poor* (1861) were not unlike historians' objectives today.<sup>20</sup> Mayhew was blessed with access to the people then living, but his work forms the basis of much subsequent research on life in the nineteenth-century metropolis.

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<sup>20</sup> Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor; a Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those that Will Work, Those that Cannot Work, and Those that Will not Work*, Volume 1 (London, 1861).

At the turn of the nineteenth century, London's million inhabitants made it one of the largest cities the world had ever known. It was also a magnet for immigrants. According to E.A. Wrigley, 8,000 *more* people migrated to the city each year than died or emigrated, just to maintain the rate of population growth we know occurred.<sup>21</sup> Lien Bich Luu's work on early modern immigration in London (2005) highlights the long history of new people arriving in the capital from across Europe and Ireland.<sup>22</sup> Her subsequent article on xenophobia underlined that unfortunately not all of these new Londoners found themselves welcomed.<sup>23</sup> Moving to a new place can be a very isolating experience. Luu's work is part of a much larger narrative on migration during the early modern era, much of which involved the Irish, but also pertained to English internal migration, Scots, Welsh, Jewish, and European movement into the capital.<sup>24</sup>

The Irish have long been drawn to Britain – particularly its urban hubs. London along with the industrialising Clydeside, Liverpool and Manchester became home to hundreds of thousands of Irish individuals in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For those who could not afford passage across the Atlantic, Britain was the most obvious option. It was close, and well-worn paths of migration across the Irish Sea paved the way for subsequent individuals. For migrants in Ireland, Britain satisfied George Kingsley Zipf's 'principle of least effort', which contended people will travel the least possible distance to find an

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<sup>21</sup> E.A. Wrigley, 'A Simple Model of London's Importance in the Changing English Society and Economy 1650-1750', *Past and Present*, 37 (July 1967), 46.

<sup>22</sup> Lien Bich Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London 1500-1700* (Aldershot, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Lien Bich Luu, "'Taking the Bread out of Our Mouths': Xenophobia in Early Modern London", *Immigrants & Minorities*, 19 (2010), 1–22.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Redford, *Labour Migration in England: 1800-1850*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition [1926] (Manchester, 1964); P Clark, 'Migration in England during the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Past and Present*, 83 (1979), 57–90; John Wareing, 'Migration to London and Transatlantic Emigration of Indentured Servants, 1683-1775', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 7 (1981), 356–78; David Souden, "'East, West - Home's Best'? Regional Patterns in Migration in Early Modern England", in Peter Clark and David Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (Totowa, New Jersey, 1987), 292–332; Colin G. Pooley and Jean Turnbull, 'Migration and Mobility in Britain from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries', *Local Population Studies*, 57 (1996), 50–71; George R. Boyer and Timothy J. Hatton, 'Migration and Labour Market Integration in Late Nineteenth-Century England and Wales', *The Economic History Review*, 50 (1997), 697–734; Ian D Whyte, *Migration and Society in Britain 1550-1830* (London, 2000).

acceptable opportunity.<sup>25</sup> Because so many Irish men and women at the turn of the nineteenth century were looking for acceptable opportunities elsewhere, and because London was so near and so full of promise, the Irish quickly became the largest group of foreign inhabitants of the metropolis. Thousands arrived each year either as temporary migrants or permanent emigrants. Many stayed and raised their London-born families in the metropolis. Yet many found themselves on the outside of an English society that was unwilling to take them in as their own. These Irish in London did build face-to-face communities, but were also part of what Benedict Anderson called ‘imagined communities’; the Irish were seen as a distinct group or series of groups within the city that stayed separate from their English counterparts.<sup>26</sup> If they were going to survive, they would have to look out for one another.

Much of the early historiography on the Irish in Britain supported the use of Anderson’s imagined community model to describe the Irish. M.A. Busteed, R.I. Hodgson, and W.J. Lowe, have all provided works on the Irish in Britain’s industrial north, which emphasised the closeness of Irish communities in Britain and their distinctiveness from the wider English population.<sup>27</sup> Lynn Hollen Lees’ seminal work, *Exiles of Erin* (1979) argued that Irish migrants had not tried to integrate into London society, and instead brought their own beliefs and customs that they sought to install in the capital.<sup>28</sup> They segregated themselves, according to Lees. Sheridan Gilley suggested that the feeling was mutual; he argued that English Catholics in particular, were uninterested in conversing with Irish Catholic immigrants and instead focused their energy on gaining English converts.<sup>29</sup> Kirby Miller, looking at the Irish in America, suggests the reason for

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<sup>25</sup> George Kingsley Zipf, ‘The P1 P2D Hypothesis: On the Intercity Movement of Persons’, *American Sociological Review*, 11 (1946), 677–86.

<sup>26</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1982).

<sup>27</sup> W.J. Lowe, *The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire: The Shaping of a Working Class Community* (New York, 1989); M. A. Busteed and R. I. Hodgson, ‘Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life in Early Nineteenth-Century Manchester’, *The Geographical Journal*, 162 (1996), 139–53; M.A. Busteed, ‘Identities in Transition: Irish Migrant Outlooks in Mid-Victorian Manchester’, in D. George Boyce and Roger Swift (eds.), *Problems and Perspectives in Irish History since 1800*, (Dublin, 2004), 80–94.

<sup>28</sup> Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester, 1979).

<sup>29</sup> Sheridan Gilley, ‘English Catholic Attitudes to Irish Catholics’, in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.), *Irish Identities in Victorian Britain* (London, 2011), 98–119.



this failure to integrate may have been tendency of the Irish to see themselves as exiles rather than members of the new community, implying a similar attitude towards homesickness may also have prevailed amongst the Irish in Britain.<sup>30</sup> All of these works emphasised the Irish as 'other': a distinct group who were not English.

Works focusing on the Victorian era repeatedly stressed this same idea. In addition to Hollen Lees' work, earlier works by L.P. Curtis', *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (1968) and *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (1971) and Richard Lebow, *White Britain and Black Ireland: The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy* (1976) relied heavily on discussions of otherness, racialisation, and ethnicity.<sup>31</sup> Though both authors looked at Ireland, these books ultimately tell us more about Britain and ideas of Britishness by defining the British identity using racial and ethnic ideas, or by defining the Anglo-Irish relationship as one of coloniser and colony. In the Victorian era, British society was coming to grips with the ideas of evolution and at the same time trying to self-justify Britain's expanding colonial policy and feelings of ethnic superiority.<sup>32</sup> The large numbers of Irish immigrants, particularly after the famine in the 1840s, meant that the Irish were visible in British cities, and people began to engage with ideas of who they were and what their presence meant. Edward Lengel noted that this influx of Irish individuals taxed the patience of the locals, who saw their community profoundly changed in recent memory without their consent.<sup>33</sup>

Histories of Victorian Britain dominate the historiography, but the famine is a watershed in Irish migratory history. Conversely, attitudes towards the Irish in the early nineteenth century were coloured by discussions surrounding the union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. The union had come out of a failed

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<sup>30</sup> Kirby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford, 1985).

<sup>31</sup> L.P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (New York, 1968); Richard Ned Lebow, *White Britain and Black Ireland: The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy* (Philadelphia, 1976).

<sup>32</sup> Michael Willem De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Edward G. Lengel, *The Irish Through British Eyes: Perceptions of Ireland in the Famine Era* (London, 2002).

Irish rebellion in 1798, and grumblings from Westminster pointed towards a belief that closer integration was the best way to secure order in Ireland. Not everyone agreed. From the Irish perspective, the rhetoric surrounding the union was evidence that the English needed to justify to themselves their continued oppression of the Irish people. From the British perspective, this was evidence that its imperial ambitions were rooted in a wider altruistic mission to spread peace, order, and prosperity.<sup>34</sup> Lebow in particular insisted on framing Ireland as not a partner in a union, but a colony, which led to a considerable academic discussion in subsequent works.<sup>35</sup> These Victorian studies tell us a great deal about conditions during the Victorian era, but the scale of Irish migration to Britain was much smaller in the early nineteenth century, so, the conclusions do not necessarily apply, or at least must be re-tested with the earlier period in mind.

In between the discussions of the 1801 union and the famine of the 1840s, there has as yet been little work on the Irish in Britain. There has been a lack of interest in post-union Irish immigrants to Britain until very recently. From an Irish historian's point of view, the early nineteenth century is rather bereft of poignant moments. Irish historiography has stuck largely to the 1798 rebellion, to Catholic champion Daniel O'Connell in the 1820s, and to the famine in the 1840s.

Theirs was a generation that should not be disregarded because the Irish were predominantly at peace with the British and getting used to a new relationship; although that was unusual in its own way. Studies of the extraordinary provide us with insight into how society reacts to extraordinary circumstances, but it gives us a skewed perception of the past as a place of stark dichotomies where people were overly emotional or violent or reasonable, as the stories may tell.

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<sup>34</sup> See: Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and Its Aftermath* (London, 1977); Patrick M. Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union: A Study in High Politics 1798-1801* (Dublin, 1999); Douglas Kanter, *The Making of British Unionism, 1740-1848* (Dublin, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> See: Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London, 1999); Jennifer Ridden, 'Britishness as an Imperial and Diasporic Identity: Irish Elite Perspectives, c. 1820-79', in Peter Gray (ed.), *Victoria's Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837-1901* (Dublin, 2004), 88-105; *Ireland and the British Empire*, Kevin Kenny (ed.), (Oxford, 2004).

What happens if we look in on society at a point or in a way that other historians might not have expected us to? What can we learn? How does it fit within the larger narratives? That is not to say I have avoided the traditional historiography. I have jumped excitedly towards interdisciplinary threads where I saw them, and tried to avoid the obvious whenever possible. This period of 1801 to 1820 was the first in those decisions, chosen specifically to avoid the exceptional moments and to look instead at the routine, in as much as it is possible to do so, to see a different side of life than we so often find in our history books. This made sense given the distant reading approach I sought to take, which looks for patterns that can be disrupted by political and social upheaval.

Craig Bailey's recent work on the Irish middle class in London has been instrumental in changing this over-emphasis on the major events of Irish history, while at the same time revising a number of earlier attitudes towards Irish immigrants in Britain. Bailey argued against a simplified model of understanding the Irish as a group of outsiders, and instead provided a more nuanced model that centred on the importance of personal networks. In Bailey's examples, Irish 'networks' extended back into Ireland and forward into London and beyond, providing connections, friendship, advice and support when needed.<sup>36</sup> There is no pretense that these networks could not also include English acquaintances, or that the Irishness of individuals necessarily drew them together. Instead it was presumably common experiences, friends and family, and a human desire to be helpful to someone experiencing migration to a new place, as you yourself had experienced at some point in the past that facilitated these networks. That shared knowledge of what it was like to be the new person provided safe places for those just arriving. This provided the catalyst for *Chapter Two*, which deconstructs the notion that there was a single Irish community in London and introduces the importance of both the permanent Irish population in the city, as well as the temporary people who spent a limited time in the capital, but who may never have become 'Londoners'.

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<sup>36</sup> Craig Bailey, *Irish London: Middle Class Migration in the Global Eighteenth Century* (Liverpool, 2013).

This thesis is not, however, merely a story about migration. It is also a tale of conflict and conflict resolution strategies. It explores what conflict was like for the Irish in London. Were they more likely to get in trouble? Did they receive different treatment in the hands of the law? Can we really know? A huge number of studies look at crime and poverty in London, far too many to discuss in depth here, but most of which are either directly or indirectly of concern to anyone studying the city's Irish. A contemporary report, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* (1800) by Patrick Colquhoun provided the foundation for a number of studies interested in legal history and poverty in London.<sup>37</sup> Later works such as John Beattie's *Crime and the Courts in England: 1660-1800* provided a model for understanding the changing way crime (particularly felonious crime) was used and administered throughout the later early modern era.<sup>38</sup> Beattie's book, which focused on criminal justice, highlighted that the judicial system was a reflection of conflict resolution strategies rather than purely an expression of power. This work was supplemented by Robert Shoemaker's *Prosecution and Punishment: Petty Crime and the Law in London and Rural Middlesex, c. 1660-1725* (1991), which looked at the less serious crimes (misdemeanors), and together these two works provided the basis for subsequent historians to fill in the effects of changing legislation throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth.<sup>39</sup>

This dissertation focuses on felonious crimes, which generally represent more serious disputes, though an analysis of the Irish and misdemeanours would be a productive future pathway down which to traverse and may be a worthwhile addition to this work. Felonious crime has its own historiography, particularly as it relates to the Irish in London. Many of these works provided inspiration for my own tests, to see how trends in crime held up against scrutiny when thinking particularly about the Irish. Some people had done this already for specific studies. Peter Linebaugh's *The London Hanged* (1991) highlighted the prevalence

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<sup>37</sup> Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. [London, 1800]. (2011), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/35650/35650-h/35650-h.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> J.M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England: 1660-1800* (Princeton, 1986).

<sup>39</sup> Robert B. Shoemaker, *Prosecution and Punishment: Petty Crime and the Law in London and Rural Middlesex, c. 1660-1725* (Cambridge, 1991).

of Irish defendants amongst those executed during the long eighteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Peter King took this further and asked if the justice system was systematically biased against the Irish in his article 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice. The Treatment of the Irish at the Old Bailey 1750-1825', which argued that for most types of crime, once a trial began ethnicity had no significant bearing on the outcome or the punishment.<sup>41</sup> King was himself building upon a tradition of studies on Irish criminality in Britain, including Frances Finnegan (1982), J.M. Feheney (1983), Roger Swift (1989, 1997), and Frank Neal (1990).<sup>42</sup> Like the historiography of the Irish in Britain, most of these studies focused on the Victorian era.

This thesis builds upon King's article, which used the same sources as I did (the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*), albeit from a different angle. King limited himself to nominal record linkage when identifying Irish defendants, using only those defendants for whom he had a document that provided evidence of an Irish birth. This seemed to me too limiting when identity and Irishness are matters of interpretation, particularly when it comes to second-generation Irish individuals or those who had spent many years in their new environment. An Irish birthplace is not a fail-safe indicator of Irishness. As Cormac Ó'Gráda notes, Irish emigrants often hid their birthplace from enumerators, skewing the reliability of any findings dependant entirely upon the accuracy of birthplace data.<sup>43</sup> King's interpretation of who was Irish and who was not did not necessarily match the contemporary understanding of the issue. Even worse, most records King was looking at did not provide enough information to let a reader discern the national identity of the accused, be that Irish or not. These concerns led to *Chapter Three*, which asks who the Irish in London were. How did

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*, second edition [1991], (London, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Peter King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 390–414.

<sup>42</sup> Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice: A Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-70* (Cork, 1982); J.M. Feheney, 'Delinquency Among Irish Catholic Children in Victorian London', *Irish Historical Studies*, 23 (1983), 319-329; Roger Swift, 'Crime and the Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain' in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939* (London, 1989), 163-182; Roger Swift, 'Heroes or Villains? The Irish, Crime and Disorder in Victorian England,' *Albion*, 29 (1997), 399-421; Frank Neal, 'A Criminal Profile of the Liverpool Irish,' *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 140 (1990), 161-199.

<sup>43</sup> Ó'Gráda, 'Nineteenth Century Emigration Statistics', 145.

contemporaries identify the group and how does that differ from the way historians can do the same?

Arguably, King's over-caution led him to miss too many relevant defendants and skewed his results. I was convinced there were more interesting trends out there that historians could identify if only there was more experimentation that sought to increase the speed with which we could reliably identify the Irish. For a possible solution I turned to a brief article by Malcolm Smith and Donald MacRaild, in which the pair used onomastics (the study of names) to identify the Irish by surname.<sup>44</sup> Subsequent large-scale studies by Paul Longley, James Cheshire, and Pablo Mateos along with their various colleagues have reinforced this method with their analyses of British, Czech, and Japanese names, and have begun to bring the technique into the mainstream.<sup>45</sup> The work of the latter group became public too late to be an influence on my own technique, but this body of literature, which extends much further than it is practical to outline in this introduction, provided an opportunity to apply onomastics to a series of historical questions related to the Irish and crime in London. The technique I was able to develop allowed me to significantly increase the proportion of probable Irish people in a set of records – in this case, criminal trial accounts. Using a large-scale analysis of census material, *Chapter Four* argues that surname is a useful measure of Irishness when no other information is available.

This has obvious advantages for someone interested in the Irish experience with crime and conflict resolution. If you can easily and accurately identify the Irish from amongst thousands of defendants, you can begin to slice up your records in lots of different ways and ask lots of different questions of them. Some will be fruitful. Others will not. Tim Hitchcock calls this “‘staring at data’ – looking open-

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<sup>44</sup> Malcolm Smith and Donald M. MacRaild, 'The Origins of the Irish in Northern England: An Isonymic Analysis of Data from the 1881 Census', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.), *Irish Identities in Victorian Britain* (London, 2011), 24–49.

<sup>45</sup> James Cheshire and Paul Longley, 'Spatial concentrations of surnames in Great Britain', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 20 (2011), 279–286; J. Novotný and James Cheshire, 'The Surname Space of the Czech Republic: Examining Population Structure by Network Analysis of Spatial Co-Occurrence of Surnames', *PLoS ONE*, 7 (2012); James Cheshire, Paul Longley, K. Yano, T. Nakaya, 'Japanese surname regions', *Pap Reg Sci* (2013).

eyed at endless iterations of the material, cut and sliced in different ways”.<sup>46</sup> When it comes to sampling populations, the greater the sample size the more opportunities there are for fruitful ‘staring’ that will lead towards interesting outcomes. A researcher might ask how one group differed from the wider population. Or how was it the same? This thesis turns to the wider historiography on felonious crime and looks for studies that provided a good test case for my new digital tool that used surname analysis to identify the most likely set of Irish defendants. The limits of the tool, outlined above, mean that it is best suited to a distant reading of the crime records – an approach that does not rely heavily on any one individual’s story, but instead seeks to identify trends in crime. With this trend-seeking approach, individual experiences are foregone in lieu of a vision of how the population collectively behaved and was treated.

The final four chapters explore how these distant readings of the crime records hold up to the scrutiny of close reading, to determine the reliability of this digital humanities approach to crime history. The possible choices in the historiography for choosing a distant reading topic to test were nearly endless, but I settled on three themes in particular. *Chapter Five* explains the process of combining Hitchcock’s ‘staring at data’ with the historiography in the final three chapters, each focusing on one of these themes.

The first of these chapters, *Chapter Six*, uses evidence of changing prosecution patterns related to currency offenses during the ‘Restriction Period’ of the early nineteenth century. This was an opportunity to push Peter King’s findings about the Irish experience in front of the magistrate back to an earlier stage of the justice system, one where the prosecutor made the decision to proceed with the case or to abandon it. King had concluded that there was no anti-Irish bias in the trial stage of the justice system, but this chapter shows that bias may have already run its course by the time the trial began. This chapter also picked up on Deirdre Palk’s findings (2006) about the uniquely transparent records of the Bank of England’s *Committee for Lawsuits*, which ‘provide an interesting view of

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<sup>46</sup> Tim Hitchcock, ‘Academic History Writing and the Headache of *Big Data*’ *Historyonics*, (30 January 2012), <http://historyonics.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/academic-history-writing-and-headache.html>.

the justice system in the early stages of the judicial process'.<sup>47</sup> The results suggest that a legal system that put the decision to prosecute in the hands of the victim left the Irish at a slight disadvantage, but that the growing professionalisation of the law system in the early nineteenth century dramatically leveled the playing field. The evidence suggests that the more systematic the justice system became, the better outsiders such as the Irish tended to fare.

*Chapter Seven* looks at the impact of seasonal cycles of migration, employment, and poverty, to show just how important temporary migration was to the Irish in London. This second theme attempts to tie together Barbara Kerr's research, 'Irish Seasonal Migration to Great Britain 1800-38' (1943) with evidence of Irish prosecutions in the *Old Bailey Online* records for the first time.<sup>48</sup> To accomplish this I drew upon Craig Bailey's emphasis on the impermanence of many Irish in London in a way that had not before been visible amongst the lower orders. By linking changes in Irish crime to seasonal or temporary people, the question of the Irish and conflict in London becomes complicated and one must ask to what extent it was someone's Irishness, and to what extent it was their lack of connections in the community that led to the dispute. The trends identified in this chapter highlight points of conflict between the Irish and the locals that correspond with an annual influx of temporary workers into the capital in summer and autumn. Perhaps surprisingly, the Irish show considerably less criminal activity in the winter because so many of them seem to have been back in Ireland with their families.

Finally, *Chapter Eight* builds upon the work of Douglas Hay and John Beattie, and demonstrates the impact of demobilisation during the Napoleonic Wars as a catalyst for bringing Irishmen unwillingly to the capital, where many of them got

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<sup>47</sup> Deirdre Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion 1780-1830* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2006), 89.

<sup>48</sup> Barbara M. Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration to Great Britain, 1800-38', *Irish Historical Studies*, 3 (1943), 365–80.



into trouble.<sup>49</sup> By applying the same techniques to the Irish appearing in front of the jury at the Old Bailey, assumptions about how Irishness was at the root of discord again come into question. Instead it is external pressures beyond the boundaries of the community, caused by the return of demobilised soldiers *en masse* as well as nation-wide poverty that seem the obvious source of frustration and anger, which too often resulted in crime and a subsequent trial. Ironically, it was English government policy rather than Irish desire that brought so many men to London, where they were resented by the locals who had no use for them.

These patterns add greater depth to our understanding of how the Irish experienced crime and justice differently from the local population. It is clear that the Irish were disadvantaged in many ways in early nineteenth-century London. It is clear that the locals saw them differently, and treated them differently. We have the advantage of hindsight and of large corpora of machine-readable text for making those discoveries. Most of these trends probably went unnoticed by contemporaries. All of them have gone unnoticed by historians to date. Does that mean the *Old Bailey Online* corpus and digital tools such as surname analysis are changing the answers we can get to historical questions? As I show throughout this thesis, there are limits to the distant reading approach, but also possibilities. I hope that the digital nature of the records and the digital approach to my research demonstrate that there is a place for this type of research in the historiography.

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<sup>49</sup> J.M. Beattie, 'The Pattern of Crime in England 1660-1800', *Past & Present*, 62 (1974), 47–95; Douglas Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft in the Eighteenth Century: The Record of the English Courts', *Past & Present*, 95 (May 1982), 117–60.

## **Part 1: The Nuance of Irishness and a new Tool for Historians**



# 1. Historical Irishness

The poor old Duke! What shall I say of him, To be sure he was born in Ireland,  
but being born in a stable does not make a man a horse.

*Daniel O'Connell (allegedly)*<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation and its variations, attributed to Irish reformer Daniel O'Connell, speaking about Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, perfectly frames the challenge of understanding Irishness. 'Irishness' is a social construct. The term means different things to different people at different times and in different contexts. This phenomenon is not unique to Irishness; all group identities are fundamentally social constructs, or what Benedict Anderson calls 'imagined communities'. These communities are comprised of individuals who have not or may not ever meet one another.<sup>2</sup> In the long eighteenth century, examples of imagined communities include the members of a religion (Catholics, for instance), people who practice a given trade (butchers), or people who live in the same town (Londoners). According to Ian McBride, this idea of an imagined community was only just beginning to apply to the Irish by the late eighteenth century when the 'common name of Irishman' first emerged.<sup>3</sup> Before that, Ireland had been segregated into competing social, religious, and ethnic factions and did not unite under a shared national banner.<sup>4</sup> This chapter will discuss how Ireland came to be divided along these factional lines, as well as how group identities present challenges for historians seeking to understand an historical collective.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Shaw, *Shaw's Authenticated Report of the Irish State Trials* (Dublin, 1844), 93.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>3</sup> Ian McBride, "'The Common Name of Irishman': Protestantism and Patriotism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland", in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650-c. 1850* (Cambridge, 1998), 236-261.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the growth of Irish nationalism in the 1790s, see: Theobald Wolfe Tone, *Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone* (London, 1827); Rosamond Jacob, *The Rise of the United Irishmen: 1791-94* (London, 1937); Sean Cronin, *Irish Nationalism: A History of its Roots and Ideology* (Dublin, 1980); Nancy Curtin, *The United Irishmen: Popular Politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791-1798* (Oxford, 1994); Marianne Elliott, *When God Took Sides: Religion and Identity in Ireland* (Oxford, 2009); Marianne Elliott, *Wolfe Tone* (Liverpool, 2012).

Deciding who belongs and who does not belong to any given community can seem arbitrary. The boundaries of these groups are frequently blurred. Jennifer Todd argues that defining the criteria used for delineating membership can feel like trying to hit a moving target; she argues that ethnic identities should be seen as interpretations rather than a litmus test with a binary yes or no answer. She believes that all identities are 'identity-packages', which can be remolded and should not be seen as unchanging personal traits.<sup>5</sup> For Todd, there is more than one way to be Irish, just as there is more than one way to be Basque or Ulster Protestant. This makes all imagined communities and identities difficult to define; even those that may seem unambiguous. In this way, two contemporaries can hold different definitions of what constitutes membership of the same community. More likely, all contemporaries hold slightly different definitions, making a single authoritative description of something like Irishness impossible.

### ***Varieties of Irishness***

In terms of national identities, Irishness is particularly elusive. For centuries the Irish have been divided; if not officially between international borders drawn on a map, then through social, ethnic, and cultural spans that seemed equally real and equally wide. These lines have been drawn along various boundaries, focusing on religion, class, and origin, but they are perhaps best described in terms of imagined communities.

Since the seventeenth century, contemporaries and historians alike have traditionally grouped the Irish into one of three religious or confessional categories: Catholics, Protestants, or Dissenters.<sup>6</sup> There were of course other religious minority groups, but the big three comprised the vast majority of the inhabitants. The Irish people were not equally distributed between these confessional groups; instead, they were heavily weighted towards Catholicism. In 1796, revolutionary Wolfe Tone estimated the Catholic population of Ireland at

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<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Todd, 'Trajectories of Change: New Perspectives on Ethnicity, Nationalism and Identity in Ireland' *Field Day Review* (Dublin: 2007), 83-89.

<sup>6</sup> For more, see S.J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom, Ireland 1630-1800* (Oxford, 2008) and Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1992) – especially chapter 4: 'Relationships', 103-143.

3,150,000, Dissenters at 900,000 and Protestants only 450,000.<sup>7</sup> That puts the religious split of the country at roughly 70:20:10, with Catholics clearly dominant in the counts. These population numbers were estimates intended to convince the French to launch an invasion of Ireland to oust the English, rather than an attempt to take anything resembling a census. More recent research based on the 1732 hearth tax records suggests the split may have been closer to 80:10:10.<sup>8</sup> The exact numbers in each group are not important; instead, what is important is to understand that at this time, Ireland had a Catholic majority, and a Dissenting and Protestant minority.<sup>9</sup>

In late eighteenth-century Ireland religion was not just a matter of performing certain rites and ceremonies, holding certain beliefs, or attending a specific church. It was an ethnic, social and legal identity with which came rights and privileges, or restrictions and punishments. Certainly there were those at the time working to end these legal and social divides. Most famously, the United Irishmen who led the Rebellion of 1798, which was fought in large part in a failed attempt to end some of the internal divisions of Ireland.<sup>10</sup>

Humans have been living in Ireland for millennia – though as is the case with all areas outside the cradle of humanity, even the earliest peoples of Ireland were immigrants from elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Over thousands of years, new people arrived, including the Vikings – who are credited with founding some of Ireland's more important cities: Dublin, Limerick and Cork – and the Scots, with whom they

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<sup>7</sup> Wolfe Tone, 'On the Present State of Ireland, Delivered to the French Government, in February 1796', in William Theobald Wolfe Tone (ed.), *Memoirs of T.W. Tone* (London: 1827), 429.

<sup>8</sup> S.J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, 249.

<sup>9</sup> In the context of Ireland, Protestant decidedly meant a member of the Church of Ireland, the Irish branch of the Anglican Church. Dissenters were generally regarded as members of the Presbyterian Church, and included smaller faiths that were neither Catholic nor Church of Ireland. Today we may be tempted to label the whole group 'Christians', or to lump the latter two together under as 'Protestants'; however, these three distinct groups are fundamental divisions in the historiography of late eighteenth century Ireland.

<sup>10</sup> For more on the Rebellion of 1798 see Nancy J. Curtin, *The United Irishmen*; Wolfe Tone, *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, William Theobald Wolfe Tone (ed.) (Washington, 1826).

<sup>11</sup> Michael Herity, 'Prehistoric Fields in Ireland', *Irish University Review*, 1 (1971), 259-261.

shared the Gaelic language and at times, military ties.<sup>12</sup> As time passed, the people of Ireland blended and reorganised into a series of indigenous factions who were far from politically united, but who shared the Gaelic language and Catholic religion. They thought of themselves as the legitimate inhabitants of the island, and are sometimes referred to as the Old Irish or (very rarely in the eighteenth and nineteenth century) as the Milesians, who according to Irish mythology, arrived in Ireland after previous waves of immigrants had rid the island of its aboriginal giants.<sup>13</sup> Over the centuries these Old Irish developed their own aristocracy, system of land ownership and use, and their own law.<sup>14</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, it was the descendants of this group who comprised the bulk of the Catholic majority, and it is from this group that the stereotypical Irish Catholic many imagine has its roots. It is worth taking a few moments to recount how this community developed and survived through the waves of incoming immigrants arriving from the east, often with swords in their hands.

Beginning in the late medieval period, new groups started to arrive that managed to supersede the Old Irish population by wresting away control of administrative functions and lawmaking. First were a group of English administrators, military men, and merchants who arrived after the Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century and who dominated the Pale, the area around Dublin, as well as some parts of the south of Ireland. This group is known variously as the Hiberno-Normans, Hiberno-English, Hiberno-Irish, Anglo-Irish, Anglo-French, Anglo-Normans, or by the late sixteenth century, the 'Old English'. They likely considered themselves English (or perhaps Norman) rather than Irish, even into succeeding generations.<sup>15</sup> This is despite the fact that the English in England often associated them with the phrase 'more Irish than the Irish themselves' because of their perceived adoption of Irish cultural traits and

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<sup>12</sup> John Bradley, 'Scandinavian Rural Settlement in Ireland', *Archaeology Ireland*, 9 (1995), 10-12; Steven G. Ellis, 'Nationalist Historiography and the English and Gaelic Worlds in the Late Middle Ages', *Irish Historical Studies*, 25 (1986), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1999), 147.

<sup>14</sup> Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest* (Dublin, 1994), 43-47.

<sup>15</sup> Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625-42* (Dublin: 2000); Ellis, 'Nationalist Historiography', 3.

because they maintained the Catholic faith even after the Reformation. However, within Ireland in the early modern era, the Old English remained largely culturally and often geographically distinct from their Gaelic neighbours, despite what many in England may have believed.<sup>16</sup>

Foreign control again increased with the Crown of Ireland Act of 1542, which was passed by Irish Parliament – controlled by English interests – and which made the English King Henry VIII, his heirs, and successors also King of Ireland. This act provided even stronger administrative links between the two countries at the expense of the indigenous peoples.<sup>17</sup> As a result of this act, Henry's subsequent Reformation also officially found its way to Ireland, though it found few converts among the locals. By the end of the sixteenth century a new group of Protestant administrators loyal to the English Monarch arrived, known as the 'New English'.<sup>18</sup> As Protestantism increasingly became intertwined with English national identity, the Catholicism of the Gaelic Irish was perceived within England, as well as with the Protestant Irish population, as a form of disloyalty or rebellion, despite an accommodationist branch of Catholics who saw no such conflict between their faith and their loyalty to the crown.<sup>19</sup>

Despite these new links between the English and Irish Crowns, English control of Ireland was still concentrated almost entirely within the four counties that comprised the Pale, surrounding Dublin. Ulster, in the north, was still a Gaelic stronghold, despite the fact that six of its nine counties now comprise Northern Ireland (the only remaining part of Ireland still within the United Kingdom). However, over the course of just under a century, between the 1550s and the 1640s, the Crown was able to confiscate large tracts of Irish land from the Gaelic leadership in Munster in the southwest and then Ulster in the north. This land

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<sup>16</sup> Lennon, *Sixteenth Century Ireland*, 44-45; Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972* (London, 1988), 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Crown of Ireland Act* (33 Henry VIII, c. 1, 1542), <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/aip/Hen8/33/1>.

<sup>18</sup> Toby Barnard, 'Protestantism, ethnicity and Irish identities 1660-1760' in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650-c. 1850* (Cambridge, 1998), 207; Ellis, 'Nationalist Historiography', 12.

<sup>19</sup> McBride, 'Common Name of Irishman', 238; Ian McBride, 'Catholic Politics in the Penal Era: Father Sylvester Lloyd and the Delvin Address of 1727', in John Bergin, Eion Magennis, Lesa Ní Mhugháile, Patrick Walsh (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Penal Era* (Dublin, 2011), 5.

was quickly resettled with English and lowland Scottish subjects loyal to the Crown, in what became known as the 'Plantations'.<sup>20</sup> Many of those Scottish people sent to Ireland were Presbyterian and formed the basis of the Dissenting community. Though Wolfe Tone's estimates do not make it clear, this Dissenting population was primarily clustered in Ulster, and was not uniformly distributed throughout the island.<sup>21</sup> The distribution of Catholics too was uneven. According to the 1732 Hearth Tax records, the percentage of Catholics in Dublin City was less than a third. It was less than a fifth in Antrim in the north. But in Catholic strongholds in the west and south such as Mayo, Galway, Clare, Tipperary, Waterford, and Kerry, the proportion of Catholics exceeded nine in ten inhabitants.<sup>22</sup>

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Catholic clan leadership in these regions was permanently destroyed. After losing the Nine Years War (1594-1603), the clan leaders left for Spain in 1607 seeking support for a rebellion. The English took advantage of this situation, later recalled as 'the Flight of the Earls', to confiscate the land and further expand the Plantations, while at the same time ridding themselves of the troublesome leaders. This was not merely a series of wars or battles that went in the Protestants' favour. It was an enduring and emotional struggle that, particularly for the Catholics, bred frustration. This frustration is perhaps best seen through the Portadown Massacre of 1641, in which approximately 100 English Protestants in County Armagh were rounded up by Catholic locals, stripped naked and forced into the River Bann, where they were killed.<sup>23</sup> Protestants, who understandably were rattled by this and similar events, retaliated violently. The process of resettlement and displacement was but one of the wedges that was driven between Ireland's Catholic and Protestant peoples.

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<sup>20</sup> Raymond Gillespie, 'Plantations in Early Modern Ireland', *History Ireland*, 1 (1993), 43-47.

<sup>21</sup> Dermot Foley, 'Presbyterians in Drogheda, 1652-1827', *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, 25 (2002), 179.

<sup>22</sup> S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power*, 146.

<sup>23</sup> For a Protestant perspective on the events, see 'An Accompt of the Bloodie Massacre in Ireland (1641)', available via *1641 Depositions Project*, (Dublin, 2012).



Protestant retaliation continued under England's Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, who led the English republic between 1653 and 1658. Cromwell crushed a Catholic-Monarchist military alliance in Ireland and disinherited the Catholic landowners, placing his own supporters on their land and threatening to banish the Catholics to the less fertile and inhospitable western province of Connacht.<sup>24</sup> United Irishman Wolfe Tone would later describe it as: 'the people of three entire provinces were driven by Cromwell into the fourth, and their property divided amongst his officers and soldiers, whose descendants enjoy it at this day'.<sup>25</sup> Again, the divides were not merely economic or religious, but of one community subjugating the other and in the process breeding deep emotional resentment.

The restoration of the Monarchy did little to alleviate Catholic oppression and Protestant control. Following the defeat of the deposed Catholic King James II in the Williamite Wars, at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, the new English monarchs, William and Mary set about introducing the first in a series of crushing anti-Catholic acts that have become known as the Penal Laws. Passed between 1692 and 1703 these laws prohibited Catholics from (among other things) owning, inheriting or being given land, owning a horse worth more than £5, going to school or university, educating their children abroad, carrying arms, or voting.<sup>26</sup> From a wealthy Catholic perspective, the leading Protestants had done everything in their power to ensure that the Catholics would never again be able to mount resistance against them. Though historians such as S.J. Connolly and Louis Cullen have argued that on a practical level many Catholic families thrived and even maintained their political influence under the penal laws, the

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<sup>24</sup> Toby Barnard, 'Planters and Policies in Cromwellian Ireland', *Past & Present*, 61 (1973), 31-69.

<sup>25</sup> Wolfe Tone, 'Present State of Ireland'; *The Act for the Settlement of Ireland* (1652).

<sup>26</sup> The most obviously impeding acts include: *The Education Act* (7 Will. III, c. 4, 1695); *An Act to Restrain Foreign Education* (7 Will. III, c. 4, 1695); *An Act for Better Securing the Government by Disarming Papists* (7 Will. III, c. 5, 1695); *An Act Declaring Which Days in the Year Shall be Observed as Holy Days* (7 Will. III, c. 14, 1695); *An Act for Banishing All Papists exercising any Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, and all Regulars of the Popish Clergy out of this Kingdom* (9 Will. III, c. 1, 1697); *An act to prevent Protestants inter-marrying Papists* (9 Will. III, c. 3, 1697); *An Act to Prevent Papists being Solicitors* (10 Will. III, c. 13, 1698); *An Act to Prevent Popish Priests from Coming into this Kingdom* (2 Ann, c. 3, 1703); *An Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery* (2 Ann c. 6, 1703); *An Act for Registering the Popish Clergy* (2 Ann c. 7, 1703); *An Act for Naturalizing all Protestant Strangers in this land* (2 Ann c. 14, 1703).

attempt to codify the discrimination of one community against another undoubtedly further cultivated animosity.<sup>27</sup>

During the century between the deaths of Elizabeth I in 1603 and William III in 1702, the ethnic makeup of Ireland changed considerably with the Scottish and English populations in Ireland growing from 3 per cent to 27 per cent.<sup>28</sup> This dramatic rise underlies the impact that plantations and resettlements had on the Irish people over a relatively short timeframe. Over the course of that same century, the Irish leadership too changed from one controlled by Old English families and a few Gaelic clans, to one dominated by the New English.<sup>29</sup>

By the late eighteenth century, these combined changes to Irish society shed a drastically different light on our initial description of the Irish as three religious communities of varying size. Rather than a Protestant minority, Ireland instead had an ethnically English group led by a social elite known first as the 'Protestant Interest' and later in the eighteenth-century the 'Protestant Ascendancy', that effectively controlled government, trade and wealth in the country.<sup>30</sup> A slightly larger group of Dissenters concentrated in Ulster had been deliberately planted in Ireland to undermine the Catholic leadership. This group had fewer rights and less money and power than the Protestant Ascendancy, but could still vote in certain circumstances and could own land. At the bottom, disinherited and severely penalised by laws meant to impinge their right to self-government and economic success, was a Catholic majority who unsurprisingly harboured considerable resentment towards both the English and their Protestant leaders. Belonging to one of these religious groups came with it an ethnic identity in Irish society. In 1689, Sir Richard Cox described the Irish identity as one in which:

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<sup>27</sup> S.J. Connolly, "'Reasonable Inconveniences': The Theory and Practice of the Penal Laws', in *Religion, Law, and Power: the Making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760* (Oxford: 1992), 312; Louis Cullen 'Catholics Under the Penal Laws, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 1 (1986), 35.

<sup>28</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Making Ireland Modern* (Dublin, 2006), 3.

<sup>30</sup> James Kelly, 'Eighteenth-Century Ascendancy: A Commentary', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 5 (1990), 173-174.

If the most Ancient Natural Irish-Man be a Protestant, no Man takes him for other than an English-Man; and if a Cockny be a Papist, he is reckoned, in Ireland, as much an Irish-man as if he was born on Slevelogher.<sup>31</sup>

Birthplace is therefore not the sole key to Irish identity. However, even the model of Irish identity described above is an oversimplification. The social structure was not that straightforward. There was a small Catholic middle and upper class.<sup>32</sup> There were Dissenters who lived outside of Ulster, and there were many poor Protestants.<sup>33</sup> The social distance between a wealthy Catholic and a wealthy Protestant was narrower than the social distance between a rich and poor Catholic.<sup>34</sup> The complex social web, which can only be oversimplified in a work such as this, is the product of millions of connections between millions of people. We can never truly understand the Irish social dynamic any more than we can completely categorise our own social circles, or places within society. However, what we can do is accept that these three religious groups represent a broad-strokes approach to understanding Irishness in a way that would have made more sense to an early nineteenth-century Irish person than would a single 'Irish' label. Within and across these three broad confessional classifications were groups and individuals who frequently resented one another and would not have relished the idea of being lumped into a single category for any reason. In the case of the Irish it seems more likely that one's religious affiliation within Ireland was as important, if not more important, than one's Irishness itself.

But, does this religious-confessional model of identity fit with the British and Irish worldview at the time? The evidence suggests perhaps not – at least when applied to the wealthy Catholics who were socially more mobile than the poor. A confessional model of identity is unstable. To some extent it is possible to choose

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<sup>31</sup> Richard Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana: or, the History of Ireland from the Conquest thereof by the English, to this Present Time*, Volume 1 (London, 1689), C2.

<sup>32</sup> Maureen Wall, 'The Rise of a Catholic Middle Class in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, 42 (1958), 91-115; Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty* (Notre Dame, 1996), 3-56.

<sup>33</sup> Katherine Butler, 'Dissenters in Dublin', *Dublin Historical Record*, 49 (1996), 5-15; Patrick Fagan, 'The Population of Dublin in the Eighteenth Century with Particular Reference to the Proportions of Protestants and Catholics', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 6 (1991), 134.

<sup>34</sup> For more on social divisions, see Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (London, 2003).

the community to which you belong. With some soul searching and a brief religious ceremony, a person can convert. William Conolly, who upon his death in 1729 was perhaps Ireland's richest man, was born Catholic, the son of an inn-keeper.<sup>35</sup> His father's decision to convert the family to Protestantism paved the way for his son's success.<sup>36</sup> The family of Edmund Burke, a prominent Westminster M.P. born in Dublin, had strong Catholic connections, yet these did little to stifle Burke's career as a politician in London. His mother, Mary Nagle, remained a practicing Catholic throughout her life, even raising Burke's sister as such. Burke's wife Jane Nugent was the daughter of a Catholic physician – though she too conformed to the Protestant faith, at least outwardly.<sup>37</sup>

The success of these men shows that a religious identity in Ireland was, as Roy Foster points out, "not simply a 'Protestant' versus 'Catholic' tradition: varieties of identification certainly took religious labels, but as often as not the religious identification was simply a flag for a whole range of attitudes and values".<sup>38</sup> Conolly's position in government, his vast fortunes and tracts of land, would never have come to fruition had his father not converted the family. Neither would have Burke's political ambitions, if the family did not join the Protestant faith.

Rather than suggest that converting represented an abandonment of one's friends and family or a swapping of one community for another, the evidence points overwhelmingly in the other direction. Louis Cullen argues that converts maintained Catholic links throughout their lives and built their personal networks organically, presumably adding both Catholics and Protestants as they were introduced to new people.<sup>39</sup> Ian McBride agrees, showing that Burke himself maintained ties to Catholic acquaintances throughout his life. Conversions, even nominal conversions, blurred the lines between the

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Quane, 'Speaker Conolly', *Dublin Historical Record*, 25 (1971), 25-32.

<sup>36</sup> Patrick McNally, 'Conolly, William (1662–1729)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6097>].

<sup>37</sup> Ian McBride, 'Burke and Ireland' in David Dwan and Christopher Insole (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Edmund Burke*, (Cambridge, 2012), 182.

<sup>38</sup> Roy Foster, 'History and Identity in Modern Ireland', *Eighth Annual Bindoff Lecture* (London, 12 March 1997), 5.

<sup>39</sup> Cullen, 'Catholics Under the Penal Laws', 27.

communities. In addition to Burke, McBride shows that some Irish Catholic families became nominal Protestant converts and emerged as important players in Dublin legal circles.<sup>40</sup> Though some Protestants questioned the true religious conviction of converts, conversion acted as a legal loophole for wealthy or ambitious Catholics. Like their contemporary skeptics, for those who converted, we will never know if it was privilege or faith that led them to join the Protestant community. The cynic in us surely suggests at least some saw the potential for material rewards.

Neither a confessional identity nor an identity that focuses on socio-economic status is the only criteria one can use for defining an imagined community. Ethnicity, or the idea of a 'people' who share an identity is another model that frequently surfaces to describe groups of people with perceived connections to one another, though it is not without its problems. Benedict Anderson describes an ethnic group as:

inherently limited in space and continuous in time, a spatially distinctive 'people', which is thought of as stretching back into the past and moving into the future, and is typically associated with a symbolism of origin and a set of origin-myths.<sup>41</sup>

At the end of the seventeenth century, Ireland had at least four ethnic groups, as compared to its three religious identities: the Old Irish, the Old English, the New English, and the Scottish Planters. Of course, these groups did not remain ethnically 'pure' or distinct. As Colin Kidd shows, intermarriage between the Old Irish and the Old English was common in the seventeenth century. So too was intermarriage between the Old English and the New English.<sup>42</sup> After generations of this mixing, we are left with the question, 'Who is Irish enough?' As it happens, this is a cultural question, not a matter of fact. If someone has an Irish mother and an English father, are they Irish? That depends on tradition, law and opinion. In the Jewish faith, only the mother can pass down a Jewish identity. In the paternalistic United Kingdom, women could not pass down British citizenship

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<sup>40</sup> McBride, 'Burke and Ireland', 182.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6-7.

<sup>42</sup> Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism*, 149.

until 1983. The child of an Irish mother and English father in the early nineteenth century may be culturally Irish, but would be legally English. The ambiguous cases are seemingly endless. What about someone who has three Irish grandparents but has been in England for the past two generations? In 1807, a man testified 'he was born in London, but that he had spent most of his time in Ireland'.<sup>43</sup> Was he Irish or English? A few years later in 1811, a Mr. Gurney testified 'I was part of my time reared in Ireland, and part in Scotland. Ireland is the place of my nativity'. Identity is full of ambiguity.<sup>44</sup> Even if we did all agree on who was ethnically Irish enough, how does one accurately tell this type of Irishness without DNA testing that was unavailable in the nineteenth century, and arguably not even available in the twenty-first century?<sup>45</sup>



Neither the rigid ethnic model, the shifting socio-economic model, nor the flexible confessional-based model holds the entire key to our understanding of identity and Irishness in the early nineteenth century. Instead, each plays their part in a complex social web. We know this because we all carry with us multiple identities. Some are based on changeable features: our hairstyle, clothing, religion or political affiliation. Others are more rigid: who our parents are, where we were born, our sexual orientation. Not all of our identities are relevant at any given time. Rather, they are context-specific. Locals would likely regard a poor Irish Catholic in London first and foremost as poor when begging in the streets, as Catholic when leaving Mass, and as Irish when speaking aloud. None are more important than the others, and none conflict. All are contextually determined on the spot by the viewer or person interpreting what they see.

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<sup>43</sup> 'May 1807, trial of John Brown (t18070513-22)', *OBPO*.

<sup>44</sup> 'October 1811, trial of William Habberfield (t18111030-43)', *OBPO*.

<sup>45</sup> Projects such as National Geographic's *The Genographic Project* promise to analyse your DNA. Using genetic mutations in your chromosomes they claim to be able to map your ancestor's path out of Africa. These processes are currently in their infancy and as such can only follow a single ancestral strain, usually either the paternal or maternal line (all of your father's grandfathers, or all of your mothers grandmothers). *The Genographic Project*, <https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/> (accessed on May 25, 2011).

The list of identities that one person can have is endless. These include geographic identities, urban versus rural identities and, of course, wealth. In light of what is written above, our twenty-first century nationalist understanding of identity that revolves around geography, passports, place of birth or political allegiance is less applicable to the Irish in the early nineteenth century. Kidd suggests the idea of identity itself may have been anachronistic in a world that placed far greater emphasis on 'loyalty, station, degree, honour, connection, orthodoxy and conformity'.<sup>46</sup> In this respect, perhaps he is right with regards to Ireland. Belonging to an ethnic or confessional community in Ireland was an abstract characteristic to which contemporaries may have paid little attention on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, the confessional, ethnic, and social identities that we can apply to the people of Ireland towards the end of the eighteenth century do help us to understand the complex dynamic between the people who called the island home. What we must take away is that for most, particularly before the 1790s and the United Irish movement, the concept of an 'Irish' identity was itself unsuitable.

If there is anywhere that 'Irishness' existed as a singular entity, it was outside Ireland. All Irish persons were fair game for the slew of ethnic slurs hurled by the English, be they wealthy Irish gentlemen or poor Catholic slum dwellers.<sup>47</sup> While there were certainly shades of identity within Ireland and within the Irish communities in London, the same shades disappeared when transplanted into a foreign society where the locals would likely have been blind to many of the subtleties that were so obvious to residents of Ireland. Benjamin Bankhurst notes this was as true in America as it was in London. In 1718, the Reverend James MacGregory wrote to the governor of Massachusetts complaining that people kept calling him *Irish* 'when we so frequently ventured our all, for the British crown and liberties, against the Irish Papists'.<sup>48</sup> Within Ireland, one's Irishness was merely one identity of many, and one that was mapped on top of

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<sup>46</sup> Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism*, 291.

<sup>47</sup> McBride, 'Burke and Ireland', 186.

<sup>48</sup> Benjamin Bankhurst, 'Early Irish America and its Enemies: Ethnic Identity Formation in the Era of the Revolution, 1760-1820', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 5:2 (2012), third page of the article [referenced from author's proofs].

one's religion, which may have ultimately been more important.<sup>49</sup> Back in London, the ex-patriot, who left home with so many subtle identities, is stripped of most of them when arriving abroad, where the locals have their own understanding of the world. It was in London, Paris, Philadelphia or any other place outside Ireland that 'Irishness' most clearly existed. Anywhere that a simple, universal label was needed to describe this group of people who clearly did not come from 'around here'. The next chapter will look at the Irish in London, and will seek to answer a pair of seemingly straightforward questions: How many were there? And was there an 'Irish community' in the metropolis?

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<sup>49</sup> McBride, 'Common Name of Irishman', 260-261.



## 2. The Irish Communities of London

There had been an Irish population in London for centuries. We see evidence at various points in English history of the Irish being expelled from the city, or their rights being restricted. No one bothers to write laws to punish people who are not present, and so the statutes in 1243 and 1413 that expelled the Irish beggars from the capital or the restrictions imposed on Irish paupers during the English Civil War two centuries later are good evidence of an enduring (and unwanted) Irish population in the metropolis.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, vagrancy removal records from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are littered with references to people shipped back to Ireland for begging or attempting to claim parochial relief.<sup>51</sup> Between 1778 and 1786, at least 3,148 Irish were expelled from the capital under the vagrancy laws.<sup>52</sup> Because of gaps in the surviving records, we might estimate the total number at roughly double those counted. Unfortunately lists of expelled vagrants did not exist – or at least did not survive – for the period 1801-1820, but the earlier records do provide good evidence of a substantial Irish population in the city only a generation before. If hundreds were shipped out of the city each year, how many remained by the early decades of the nineteenth century? What was the size of the Irish population in London?

### *Counting the Irish*

The number of Irish in London is not a matter of fact; it is a matter of interpretation. It depends on who you count. Even what constituted *London* is a matter of interpretation. Urban sprawl meant that the early modern walled ‘City of London’ had long-since blended with the discrete city of Westminster, a couple of miles up the river, and with Southwark (or the Borough as it is often called), on the opposite bank of the Thames. By the early nineteenth century, even the

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<sup>50</sup> For more on the medieval expulsions, see: Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 45. For details on the Civil War era restrictions, see: Kathleen M. Noonan, ‘The Cruell Pressure of an Enraged, Barbarous People’: Irish and English Identity in Seventeenth-Century Policy and Propaganda’, *The Historical Journal*, 41 (1998), 171-175.

<sup>51</sup> Tim Hitchcock, Adam Crymble, Louise Falcini. ‘Loose, Idle and Disorderly: Vagrant Removal in Late Eighteenth-Century Middlesex’, *Social History*, 39 (2014), 509-527.

<sup>52</sup> Adam Crymble, Louise Falcini, Tim Hitchcock, ‘Vagrant Lives: 14,789 Vagrants Processed by Middlesex County, 1777-1786’, *Vagrant Lives Project* (2013) DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13103.

boundaries of these three cities had become indistinct in the much larger urban area that spilled outwards in all directions, swelling the footprint of the metropolis. Throughout the city's history, there has been any number of accepted boundaries for London; as a result, when anyone – be they historians or contemporaries – says 'London' they may mean different things. The accepted boundaries of London could be anything from: London within the walls, without the walls, within and without the walls, the 112 parishes, 130 parishes, London and Westminster, and so on.<sup>53</sup>

An equally plausible definition of London includes the hinterland from which people could have relatively easily accessed the city on a daily or weekly basis. This extended definition roughly matches that given by Daniel Lysons in his four-volume *The Environs of London*, written between 1792 and 1796, that included parishes within twelve miles of the city – roughly the distance at which the Royal Mail coaches were supplied fresh horses.<sup>54</sup> This extended description of London is also the basis of Elizabeth McKellar's *Landscapes of London*, which argued for the importance of the transitional zone between the metropolis and the countryside.<sup>55</sup> The rural *Londoners* who lived in the parishes defined by Lysons and McKellar may not have played a major part in the direct politics of the city, but their presence in London was felt. Each day some of these peripheral Londoners joined the urbanites on the city's streets, buying and selling and interacting, and so it would be shortsighted to overlook their contribution to city life.

It is impossible to provide a rigid boundary for the edge of London in the early nineteenth century. One cannot have a foot in London and a foot in the countryside in the way one can have a foot in a river and a foot on dry land. Though I have used no ruler to ensure all references in this thesis conform to Lysons' twelve-mile radius, readers are advised that it is in the spirit of Lysons'

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<sup>53</sup> Vanessa Harding, 'The Population of London, 1550-1700', *The London Journal*, 15 (1990), 112.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London: Being an Historical Account of the Towns, Villages, and Hamlets, Within Twelve Miles of that Capital; Interspersed with Biographical Anecdotes* (London, 1792).

<sup>55</sup> Elizabeth McKellar, *Landscapes of London: The City, the Country, and the Suburbs, 1660-1840* (Yale, 2014).

generous definition that I have attempted to frame my own definition of 'London'. My refusal to conform to a rigid boundary for London means any exacting attempts to count the Irish population in the city will fail. However I find this of no consequence, as they would have failed in any case for the reasons listed in the previous chapter. There are no records that make it possible to get a definitive count of the Irish in early nineteenth-century London. Matthew Martin managed to count 1,770 Irish beggars in London in 1797. But Martin was only interested in beggars – hardly a representative cross-section of any national group. Even amongst the beggars, Martin was only able to count those he had managed to meet through a clever scheme that involved handing out tickets to those begging that could be exchanged for money at a central location, providing an incentive for people to be counted. Based on his study, Martin estimated the total Irish beggarly population in London at around 5,300 at the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup>

The first attempt to count *all* members of society was the census, which was initially taken in 1801. However, it was not until 1841 that information was recorded about everyone's place of birth. 1841 is more than two decades after the end of this study. Nevertheless, it is a starting point. According to that 1841 census, there were roughly 75,000 Irish-born people in the capital – meaning that approximately one in twenty-five individuals in London was Irish-born.<sup>57</sup> As Table 2.1 shows, the exact count varies depending on which historian's interpretation of London one accepts.

Notwithstanding the precise count, the Irish were the largest foreign-born immigrant group in the city (though not the largest group of outsiders, as they were far outnumbered by English-born domestic migrants, who are often overlooked).<sup>58</sup> Not all accounts agree on the size of the foreign-born population. Writing in 1800, P.A. Nemnich estimated London's German population at 30 000,

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<sup>56</sup> Mathew Martin, *Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Pelham, on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis*. (London, 1803), 8 and 19.

<sup>57</sup> Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 45-50.

<sup>58</sup> For more on London's domestic migrants, see Jeremy Boulton, 'London 1540-1700' in Peter Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1985), 314-346.

or roughly three per cent of the population. This number, which would have included the Dutch, was attributed to the large German following that the Hanoverian kings had attracted. Though historians can speculate as to the extent to which this number is over-estimated or to which it includes second or third generation Germans, in this case it is our word against Nemnich's.<sup>59</sup> Looking at those groups that originated closer to home, at four per cent of the London population in 1841, the Irish were nearly twice as numerous as the Scottish-born population and those from 'foreign parts', making them a noticeable minority.<sup>60</sup> Since these census records pertain to two decades after 1820, we might presume that the population of the Irish in London at the turn of the century is probably somewhat more than Martin's beggarly estimate of 5,300 and somewhat less than 75,000.

### ***Second-Generation Irish***

However, even that upper number of 75,000 is contentious. Contemporaries routinely considered the children of Irish immigrants 'Irish' no matter where the child had been born. Matthew Martin's figures on London beggars make no attempt to identify the birthplace of beggars' children. For Martin, the child of an Irish beggar was naturally Irish. Several historians working on the Irish diaspora agree.<sup>61</sup> Studies of second-generation Irish in Britain tend to focus on the north of England. Mervyn Busted, Robert Hodgson, and Thomas Kennedy, studying the Irish in Manchester, used the census to count not only the Irish-born, but members living in Irish households, assuming that the cultural connections were more important than the place of birth.<sup>62</sup> W.J. Lowe, studying early Victorian Lancashire, showed that it was crucial to include second-generation children; by ignoring these Irish offspring, the size of the Irish community would be

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<sup>59</sup> Hermann Kellenbenz, 'German Immigrants in England' in Colin Holmes (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London, 1978), 75-76.

<sup>60</sup> H.A. Shannon, 'Migration and the Growth of London, 1841-91: A Statistical Note', *The Economic History Review*, a5 (1935), 81.

<sup>61</sup> For example, see: Joseph A. King, 'Genealogy, History, and Irish Immigration', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 10 (1984), 41-50.

<sup>62</sup> M.A. Busted, Robert I. Hodgson, and Thomas F. Kennedy. 'The Myth and Reality of Irish Migrants in mid-Nineteenth-Century Manchester: A Preliminary Study', in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Irish in the New Communities* (Leicester, 1992), 36-37.

drastically under-represented. In Lowe's study, 52 per cent of people living in 'Irish' households in Lancashire were born in England. An Irish household was defined as having an Irish-born head of household and a second Irish-born person living in the house.<sup>63</sup>

The same patterns ring true for London. An analysis of the London area from my own study of the 1841 census shows that of those males with the Irish name 'Murphy', the vast majority younger than twenty had been born in London, whereas those of the older generation were almost exclusively Irish-born. Excluding what are almost certainly the children of Irish-born fathers would have a dramatic impact on estimates of the Irish population in the city (see Figure 2.1). Similar results can be pieced together for London in 1851 and 1861 thanks to Lynn Hollen Lees (see Table 2.1). By adding the offspring of Irish-born parents, the counts rise dramatically by 43 per cent in 1851 and 66 per cent in 1861.

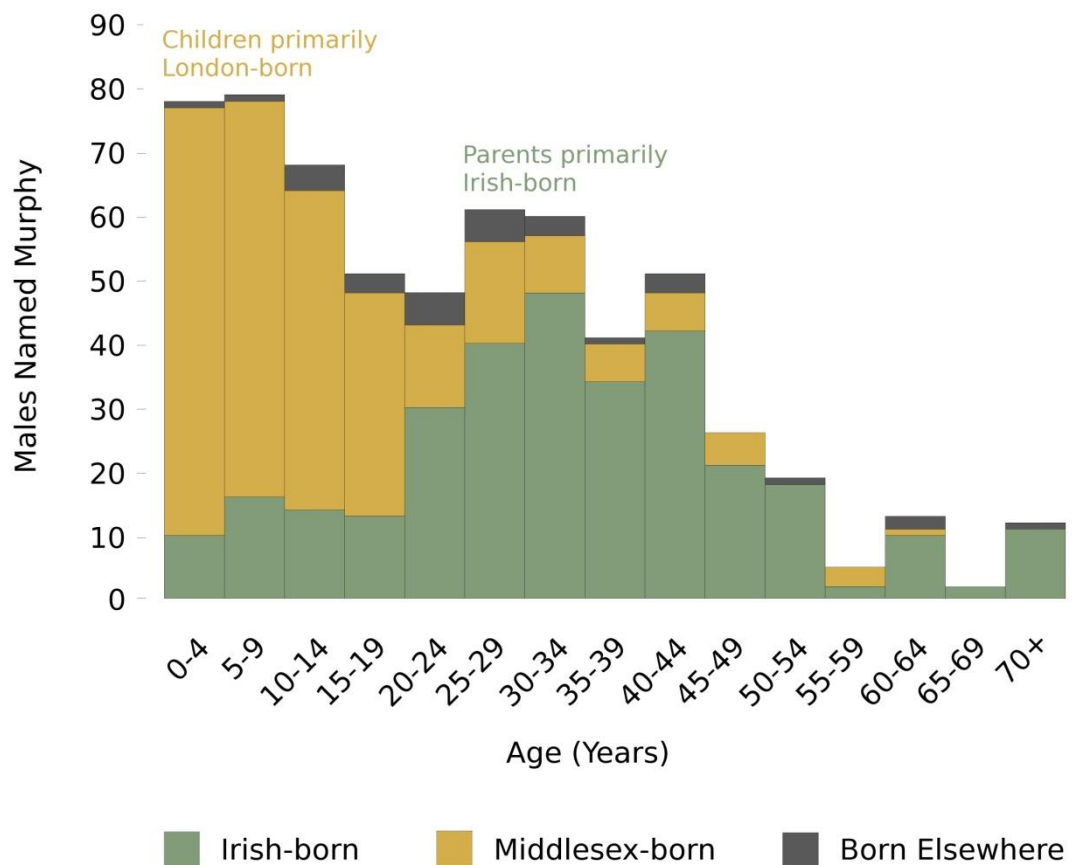
The extent to which poor urban children of Irish descent in London were culturally assimilated is difficult to ascertain. Mary Killivar admitted in 1816 that she was unable to understand her parents, who often spoke at home in the Irish language, suggesting that her parents had not bothered to pass the language along to their child.<sup>64</sup> As Roger Swift warns, it is almost impossible to determine the extent to which these Irish immigrants or their children identified with Irish culture or beliefs.<sup>65</sup> In the predominantly poor Irish areas such as St. Giles-in-the-Fields, the English-born descendants of Irish immigrants would likely have been surrounded by Irish parents, have lived amongst predominantly Irish neighbours, have been taught Irish Catholic doctrine (if any religious instruction at all), and may have grown up considerably more similar to their parents than do modern immigrant children. That is not to suggest that an urban second-generation Irish boy in London was more like a rural Irish child than his

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<sup>63</sup> W.J. Lowe, *Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire*, 48.

<sup>64</sup> 'September 1816, trial of Hannah Mahony, Ann Killivar (t18160918-7)' *OBPO*.

<sup>65</sup> Roger Swift, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914: Perspectives and Sources* (London, 1990), 32.



**Figure 2.1: Population pyramid of males with the surname Murphy (1841).**

Males living in the Hundred of Ossulstone (a region of Middlesex including large parts of suburban London), categorised by place of birth.

**Table 2.1: Irish-born and Irish-born plus offspring in London (1841-1861).**

English Census	Irish-Born	Irish-Born & Offspring
1841	73,000 – 82,291 <sup>66</sup>	?
1851	109,000 <sup>67</sup>	156,000 <sup>68</sup>
1861	107,000 <sup>69</sup>	178,000 <sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Various historians have derived estimates of the Irish-born in 1841. For example: 73 000 Irish – Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2007), 131; 74 000 Irish – Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914* (Dublin, 1991), 54; 75 000 - 80 000 Irish – Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 45-50; 82 291 Irish – Francis Sheppard, *London 1808-1870: the Infernal Wen*. (London, 1971), 5-6.

<sup>67</sup> Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2007), 134.

<sup>68</sup> Figure by Lynn Hollen Lees, cited in Sheppard, *Infernal Wen*, 5-6.

<sup>69</sup> White, *London in the Nineteenth Century*, 134.

<sup>70</sup> Figure by Lynn Hollen Lees, cited in Sheppard, *Infernal Wen*, 5-6.

ethnically English neighbours. However, it does suggest that we would be wise to exercise caution before jumping to any conclusions about the effects of assimilation. Francis Sheppard argued that it was not until the 1860s or 1870s that the Irish population really began to integrate into society, reinforcing the need for caution.<sup>71</sup> Integration in the late nineteenth century may have been caused by the appearance in England of more immigrants, in greater numbers, from further afield. This may have made the Irish seem less different when compared to the newer, more exotic immigrants, and therefore made it easier for those seeking to integrate to do so, though without further study of that period, this is merely speculation.

Looking at the very recent past, Sean Campbell offers the most balanced look at the problem of the second-generation in his article, 'Beyond plastic paddy', in which he takes the position that it might be more fruitful to view the second-generation Irish as having a hybrid Irish-Englishness that is not either, but is flexible and fluctuating.<sup>72</sup> Given this conclusion, Irish children in the nineteenth century may not have been as Irish as their parents, but they were almost certainly more Irish than the ethnically English. In this light, I believe it is important to incorporate these children amongst the Irish as Matthew Martin did in his analysis of beggars. Therefore, my definition of the 'Irish' in London includes both those born in Ireland, but also those with Irish heritage.

### ***Temporary People***

Even if we include second-generation Irish, the census is a problematic source from which to count the Irish in London. The census took a snapshot of the population on a single night – in this case on 6 June 1841.<sup>73</sup> The values derived from that count imply London's population was static. But London's population was fluid, changing every day as people were born, died, or moved into and out of town. London has also always included a significant transient population,

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<sup>71</sup> Sheppard. *Infernal Wen*, 7.

<sup>72</sup> Sean Campbell, 'Beyond "plastic paddy": A re-examination of the second-generation Irish in England', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 18 (2010), 281.

<sup>73</sup> '1841 English Census'.

amongst whom the Irish were abundant. They included seasonal workers, who will be discussed at length in chapter seven, 'Cycles of Conflict', people on short contracts that happened to take them to London on the night of June 6, and strangers who were just passing through town.

The census lists several hundred London-area entries of people named 'N K', shorthand for 'not known'. Some of these temporary lodgers may have spent only one night in the city before moving on and were caught by chance by the census enumerators. Seasonal migrants may be more realistic to measure, but even they can be tricky to isolate. Barbara Kerr estimated that by 1841 there were 57,651 Irish migrant workers spending the summer in Britain.<sup>74</sup> How many were in London on census night we do not know. The June 6 date of the count means there were probably a few thousand. The 1816 *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis*, certainly supports this conclusion. The report declared there were 'probably 5,000 more Irish poor in London in the latter end of June, than there had been five weeks before'.<sup>75</sup> This means that the census – our best source for the size of the Irish population in the city – probably overestimates the group's presence by presuming everyone counted was permanent or at least long-term.

With all these variables, ranging from problems with the sources, to issues of what constitutes London and whether to include transients and children, it becomes clear that an attempt to put a number on the size of the population in the metropolis is a fool's errand. Rather than considering the Irish population in London as a set, definable group of people, it is perhaps more helpful to consider it in more organic terms: as a constantly shifting, changing, growing and shrinking being. One that heaved and waned with the seasons, pressures in Ireland, pull factors in England, and London itself, whose very boundaries can never truly be defined. One made up of individuals who were permanent, transient, recently arrived or life-long inhabitants. One that was inevitably affected on a daily basis by the individual births and deaths of its members. How

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<sup>74</sup> Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration'.

<sup>75</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* (London, 1816), 7.



many Irish were there in early nineteenth-century London? Somewhere between 5,300 and perhaps 85,000. Depending on who you count.

### ***Irish Communities in London***

How were these Irish people in London connected to one another? How were they not? How did they fit within the wider metropolitan society? It would seem that the Irish were particularly prone to a temporary relationship with London. Newly arrived Irish immigrants were known for moving frequently from rooming house to rooming house, rather than settling in a semi-permanent arrangement.<sup>76</sup> According to Ruth-Ann Mellish Harris, many Irish immigrants to Britain in the pre-famine era had every intention of moving back to Ireland (though as David Fitzpatrick warns, without personal testimony any such claim is merely conjecture).<sup>77</sup> This impermanence throws into question the nature of the relationship some Irish people had with London and the strengths of the Irish community – or as I will argue, communities, that developed in the city.

Interpersonal connections were important; as Jeremy Boulton showed, when people moved house in early modern London, they typically moved somewhere close by, so that they could continue to draw upon their networks of kin and friends.<sup>78</sup> Despite the need for networks of support, the 1811 settlement examination of a Roman Catholic woman named Elizabeth Mackdonald (née Kelly) shows the frequency with which people moved in London. From her maiden name and religion, I suspect that this woman was Irish, though I have been unable to find corroborating evidence to confirm this in the genealogical record. It does not really matter if she was or was not, because what her story demonstrates is the mobility of the poor in early nineteenth century London. She claimed her settlement to St Lawrence Jewry parish in the City of London based

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<sup>76</sup> Lynn Hollen Lees, 'Patterns of Lower Class Life: Irish Slum Communities in Nineteenth Century London' in Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett (eds.), *Nineteenth Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History* (London, 1969), 367.

<sup>77</sup> Ruth-Ann Mellish Harris, *The Nearest Place that Wasn't Ireland: Early Nineteenth Century Irish Labor Migration* (Ames, Iowa, 1994), x; David Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain: Settlers or Transients?' in Patrick Buckland and John Belchem (eds.), *The Irish in British Labour History* (Liverpool, 1992), 6.

<sup>78</sup> Jeremy Boulton, 'Neighbourhood Migration in Early Modern London' in Peter Clark and David Souden (eds.), (Totowa, New Jersey, 1988), 107.

on her employ as a yearly hired servant in 1801 (not on her birth or her father's, suggesting she was not originally from the parish). She married in a Catholic ceremony in 1804 in Moor Fields to the north of the City. She gave birth to a son in 1806 in St Giles Cripplegate. In 1811, just before her settlement examination, she gave birth to another son, this time in St Botolph Without Aldgate, near the Tower of London in the eastern end of town. Within a decade, Elizabeth had lived in at least four different London parishes.<sup>79</sup> None of these moves took her and her family very far, and would not have precluded her from maintaining friendships or connections. However, these moves were far enough that they would have interrupted the regularity of meetings with those acquaintances. What happened to Elizabeth after that, we do not know; she may have gone to Ireland – assuming she was in fact Irish – or she may have lived out her life in the capital. Given her mobility, it would not be surprising if she moved again at some stage. Mobile people like Kelly ensured that by the nineteenth century, London was a city of strangers. Even as early as 1694, statistician Gregory King noted that within England, London in particular stood out.

For the Parishes in England having at a Medium but 130 houses to each parish, containing about 550 Souls, there is scarce an Assessor but knows every man, woman and child in the parish, which is much otherwise in London, where the Parishes have One with another 800 houses, and 4000 Souls, And where an Assessor shall scarce know 5 Families on each side of him.<sup>80</sup>

According to Jeremy Boulton, London's constant rate of turnover, caused by soaring mortality rates and large numbers of migrants had 'prevented the formation of self-conscious neighbourhoods by greatly restricting personal acquaintance'.<sup>81</sup> For longer than anyone could remember the city had been too big for its citizens to all know one another in the way members of a rural parish might do. As the years progressed, London's parishes with their geographic borders ceased to be the centre of community. Instead, communities

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<sup>79</sup> LMA, *Examination of Paupers 1808-15, St. Botolph Aldersgate*, P69/BOT1/B/042/MS01469/001, Settlement Examination of Elizabeth Kelly, 7 November 1811.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in: David Victor Glass, 'Two Papers on Gregory King' in David Victor Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (eds.), *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography, General and Great Britain* (2008), 192.

<sup>81</sup> Boulton, 'Neighbourhood Migration', 110.

transcended areas of the city, and were formed based on religious and cultural identities, or shared interests.

The labouring Irish in London quickly discovered they shared numerous interests and experiences, and in many cases shared the Catholic faith, which set them apart from the Protestant locals and helped form the basis of communal feelings towards one another. Year upon year the Irish population in the city grew. Some arrived with every intention of staying in London permanently. Many others found themselves living in London almost by accident. Sometimes migrants ran out of money and were unable to pay for their passage back home. Often they turned to their neighbours or the wider London community for help. Irish Labourers in the London parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields posted a letter in *The Morning Post* in January of 1820, asking to be sent home to till the land in Ireland, as they could not secure any work in London.<sup>82</sup> Needing help to get home to Ireland was not uncommon. Thousands of Irish men, women, and children found their way back to Ireland as vagrants, expelled from the parish for being unable to support themselves. Some even appeared to boast that they had been able to get a free ride to Ireland on the backs of the English ratepayers.<sup>83</sup> Others remained trapped in London and did what they could to stay alive and out of trouble. Others still remained voluntarily, perhaps convincing themselves they would only stay a year or two, never to leave again. Immigration is an unpredictable process and without actually realising it an immigrant can find him or herself even more attached to a new place, such as London, than they were to their homeland.

Sociologists note that a number of events can trigger this affection for a new home. A marriage to a local person, blossoming friendships, or recurring employment and improved economic prospects can raise the appeal of an adopted home.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, the death of a loved one back home, or the

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<sup>82</sup> *The Morning Post*, 4 January 1820, Issue 15,276, 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers: Part II [hereafter BL Newspapers, II].

<sup>83</sup> Arthur Redford, *Labour Migration*, 95; Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration', 377-378.

<sup>84</sup> Siew-Ean Khoo, Graeme Hugo, and Peter McDonald, 'Which Skilled Temporary Migrants Become Permanent Residents and Why?', *International Migration Review*, 42 (2008), 193-226; Slobodan

penchant of one's relatives to emigrate as well may leave someone with no cause to return to the place of their birth. Some people were not sure where *home* was. John Burke's last will and testament gave three sets of instructions for where he consented to being buried depending upon where he died: London, Galway, or Dublin. For Burke, all three places were *home*; his wife was buried in London, his ancestors in Galway, and he had come of age in Dublin.<sup>85</sup> However, not everyone felt so attached to his or her ancestral home. Some felt they had nothing to go back to once they had left. In 1812, Diane Crowe resisted being sent back to Newcastle-upon-Tyne 'on account of having no friends remaining in her native place'.<sup>86</sup> She may never have intended to make London her home, but over time it became the place where she felt most secure.

Year upon year the Irish population in London grew, slowly reaching into the thousands by the early nineteenth century, and growing considerably over the coming decades. For many arriving in London from Ireland, pre-existing connections and an extant community of ex-patriots was an appealing draw. It is important to understand this community for what it was. In fact, the term 'Irish community' is not appropriate when discussing the Irish in London. *Communities* is a more apt term, or even what Craig Bailey repeatedly refers to as *networks*.<sup>87</sup> We might even consider these to be clustered connections of networks that overlapped and interweaved to form what appeared to be a cohesive community where none actually existed. These networks supplied connections and local knowledge for those who arrived. They provided a sense of permanence in an otherwise constantly changing city. Many within these groups spoke the Irish language, could relate to the challenges of moving to London, and shared cultural values that made life in London more comfortable for those just arriving. A friendly face for a migrant is always a welcome sight.

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Djajić, 'Assimilation of Immigrants: Implications for Human Capital Accumulation of the Second Generation', *Journal of Population Economics*, 16 (2003), 831-845.

<sup>85</sup> Craig Bailey, *Irish London*, 215-216.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in K.D.M. Snell, 'Belonging and Community: Understandings of "Home" and "Friends" Among the English Poor, 1750-1850', *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 65 (2012), 17-18.

<sup>87</sup> Bailey, *Irish London*.

It is tempting to use the term ‘The London Irish’ to describe the collective of individuals living in London who had Irish connections. However the members of the Irish labouring class in the city lived in a number of different geographically diverse neighbourhoods and did not come together as a single Irish community. These distinct enclaves, which will be discussed further in the next chapter, included the rookeries of St. Giles-in-the-Fields to the northwest, the shipping and construction neighbourhoods to the east of the Tower of London, Southwark across the river Thames, and Westminster in the west. These enclaves were spatially separated from one another and these labouring Irish men and women likely had few reasons to travel into each other’s districts. Nineteenth-century Londoners were mobile, but typically lived fairly locally, since every step away from one’s door in the morning meant a step back in the evening. Margaret Makepeace’s research into the warehouse workers of the East India Company in London supports the idea of local living, showing that most of the company’s employees tended to live near the warehouses, with only a few living further afield.<sup>88</sup> This suggests it is unlikely that regular intermingling occurred between the Irish living in different corners of the metropolis and makes the concept of a single Irish community in the city unfeasible.

Londoners living at the time clearly understood the plurality of the city’s Irish communities. Contemporary accounts were often careful to specify which Irish community they meant when writing about the group. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1819, a letter in *The Morning Post* advocated the cause of the Irish Free School at Saffron-Hill, which the writer noted was an area ‘crowded with distressed Irish families, whose children have no prospect of obtaining a virtuous education but by means of this institution’.<sup>89</sup> Others regularly point out the plight of the poor Irish in St. Giles, one mile to the west.

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<sup>88</sup> Margaret Makepeace, *The East India Company of London Workers: Management of the Warehouse Labourers, 1800-1858* (Woodbridge, 2010), 50.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Saffron-Hill Irish Free Schools’ *The Morning Post*, March 13, 1819, Issue 15022, BL Newspapers, II; ‘The Irish Poor in St. Giles’s’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 17 February 1816; Issue 14600, BL Newspapers, II.

In this case it was the Irish poor of Saffron Hill that were in need of assistance – not the Irish or even the Irish poor in general. To which Irish community one belonged (if any at all) depended upon the connections one had back home, or the industry to which one offered one's labour. Within these Irish communities there were individuals who disliked one another. There are examples of Irish-on-Irish crime. But these communities also included lifelong friends and provided a network of people that one could turn to for support.

Mutual support is the prevailing theme in Craig Bailey's work on the Irish middling sort in eighteenth-century London. The Irish middle class lawyers and merchants relied upon one another. They patronised each other's businesses, spent time with one another, helped pay each other's debts in times of need, and maintained enduring and even inter-generational connections with one another.<sup>90</sup> From reading Bailey's work one gets the sense that these middle-class Irishmen barely corresponded with their English neighbours at all, nor is there evidence in Bailey's book that these middling-sort individuals provided any guidance or support for the lower-class Irish in the city. However, what is also clear from Bailey's research is that these middle-class Irish had personal networks of individuals, not unlike those we would expect from any person living today. They did not know or necessarily care to know all of the Irish people of a similar class. They met one another through introductions or chance, and formed relationships on that basis. To an outsider, it is easy to assume a level of cohesion in foreign communities that does not exist. This is an artifact of what psychologists and sociologists call in-group and out-group dynamics, in which *they* are all alike and *we* are considerably more diverse.<sup>91</sup>

The members of the labouring Irish poor also formed networks like those middle-class Irishmen described by Craig Bailey. There is evidence they stuck up for one another against the English. In 1808, a man attempting to catch and confront Sarah Fuller whom he alleged had stolen his pocketbook, was prevented from accessing the woman by a crowd of Irishmen who barred the

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<sup>90</sup> Bailey, *Irish London*.

<sup>91</sup> H. Tajfel, 'Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour', *Social Science Information*, 13 (1974), 65-93, doi:10.1177/053901847401300204.

way. Fuller was later convicted of the crime and sentenced to transportation; however the Irish network to which she belonged was apparently unconcerned with justice and instead focused on the needs of one of their own.<sup>92</sup>

Because of the size of the Irish population in London, these networks of the labouring Irish poor together comprised the most substantial non-native networks in the capital. And these Irish individuals had a penchant for finding one another. Within London we see evidence of large groups of Irish people socialising and fighting, in situations seemingly devoid of the English. From some accounts, one might even get the impression that Irish (men in particular) only travelled in packs. In 1808 Mary Jennings noted that she had seen 'thirty Irish people fighting in George alley, fighting one against the other'.<sup>93</sup> A few years earlier, publican Jonathan Trott testified that he had seen 'a number of Irish people collected together' at the bottom of Saffron Hill.<sup>94</sup> In 1810 James O'Donald was accused and convicted of stealing an umbrella at a pub, in the company of three other Irish friends.<sup>95</sup> These examples are certainly handpicked, but they and dozens more like them show clearly that the members of the Irish labouring poor in London were seeking the company of other Irish people. These same sources suggest that similar connections with the English were comparatively infrequent.

There were some practical reasons that led to the Irish segregating themselves. For Irish-language speakers, an English friend limited the conversation to English. There were few rewards for an Englishman who learned Irish, and so most did not. Irish friends were thus particularly important for those who did not understand English, such as James Quinn, who had to offer testimony in court through an interpreter.<sup>96</sup> Quinn and many others like him had been able to navigate life in London by living and working amongst the Irish, and thus never had to learn to speak English. While it may have been possible to live in London

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<sup>92</sup> 'November 1808, trial of Sarah Fuller (t18081126-16)', *OBPO*.

<sup>93</sup> 'July 1808, trial of Mary Jennings (t18080713-52)', *OBPO*.

<sup>94</sup> 'May 1806, trial of John Flynn (t18060521-6)', *OBPO*.

<sup>95</sup> 'December 1810, trial of James O'Donald (t18101205-87)', *OBPO*.

<sup>96</sup> 'July 1816, trial of Dennis Roerdon, Thomas Collett, James Quinn (t18160710-22)', *OBPO*.

and at the same time forego the English language, to do so was not without its consequences. Speaking a foreign language on the streets of London was considered poor manners. Trott accused a group of Irishmen, who were conversing in Irish at his pub, of 'not behaving like gentlemen'.<sup>97</sup> For Trott, the men were being exclusionary by speaking in a language that set them apart from the community rather than folded them into it. It may also have been the case that Trott liked to know what was being discussed at his establishment and the Irish language denied him the ability to snoop.

These Irish communities and networks became havens for those arriving from Ireland. They were well known in London, even amongst the non-Irish population. When Catherine Hannagan arrived in London from Ireland in 1811, out of money and in poor health, she was advised by a stranger to draw upon the Irish network that would be available to her in St. Giles-in-the-Fields.<sup>98</sup> This network which Hannagan and other Irish migrants were encouraged to rely upon was relatively unique within London society. It meant that she could (and in fact it would seem was expected to) segregate herself from the English population by seeking the company of fellow-Irish people whilst in the capital. Because there were so many Irish, Mellish Harris noted that there was little pressure to integrate into their adopted English society.<sup>99</sup>

Lynn Hollen Lees described the Irish poor in London as a group particularly known for their sense of communal solidarity and resistance to integration.<sup>100</sup> That resistance to integration was only possible because of the strength of these networks. Without the social and economic support offered to the Irish by their fellow-Irish, it is possible these workers would have been forced into closer contact with the English and been made to adapt in ways that facilitated integration decades earlier than when it eventually occurred.

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<sup>97</sup> 'December 1801, trial of James Cannon (t18011202-15)', *OBPO*.

<sup>98</sup> 'September 1811, trial of Catherine Hannagan (t18110918-179)', *OBPO*.

<sup>99</sup> Harris, *The Nearest Place that Wasn't Ireland*, 191.

<sup>100</sup> Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 18; M.A. Busteed and R.I. Hodgson, 'Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life', 139.



Thus the Irish were both drawn together by a desire for camaraderie with their fellow countrymen and women, and were also driven together by ill will from the English that left the Irish out in the cold. In that sense, and if one were seeking to lay fault for Irish segregation, it would appear that both sides had created a situation in which the Irish actively sought, and were actively encouraged, to keep themselves apart from the rest of London society. These segregated networks of the Irish in London were undoubtedly partly to blame for the tension that grew over time between the Irish and non-Irish populations, who did not see one another as members of the same community.

But for a contemporary to discriminate against, or dislike someone for being Irish (or perhaps even like them for it), they had to be able to identify them as such. They had to have a definition of Irishness and a way to apply it to people they met on a daily basis. The definition of Irishness in this chapter has been fairly simple, including the Irish-born, second-generation, and transients spending only a short time in the metropolis. In the preceding chapter we discussed the plurality of Irish identities, noting it was in places like London where a single Irish identity was applied. In the next chapter, we will explore what the contemporary Londoner's definition of Irishness might have looked like. Ultimately a contemporary cannot be wrong about the Irishness of one of their neighbours as long as they remain convinced, because it is formed from an opinion based on individual experiences that change over one's lifetime, and which could be impacted by something as simple as mood. For the researcher trying to define the scope of the historical Irish in London, this presents a moving target. Where does one draw the line? Who is 'Irish enough'? Which criteria are the best for creating the most accurate depiction of the Irish in the metropolis? To determine this, the discussion must first shift to an examination of the types of criteria Londoners might have used when projecting an Irish identity on someone else.

### 3. Who were the Irish in London?

Mrs. Leary, upon meeting Mary Burke, asked her if she was from Ireland. Mrs. Leary suspected Mary's Irish connection, but was unwilling to jump to a conclusion.<sup>1</sup> Her hesitation is perhaps slightly more surprising because she herself was Irish. Not everyone in the early nineteenth century, it would seem, could identify the Irishness of strangers with confidence. Nevertheless, we know that in the nineteenth century, many contemporary Londoners believed they had this skill. Contemporary records are littered with references to someone who is 'Irish' or an 'Irishman'.<sup>2</sup> In an 1815 criminal trial, a number of witnesses mention a woman named 'Irish Eliza'.<sup>3</sup> This type of nickname was not uncommon, as an 'Irish Peg' had terrorised the streets of East London a century earlier.<sup>4</sup> How contemporaries knew a stranger was Irish or not varied widely, as did the criteria they used. In some cases, such as that of Irish Eliza or Irish Peg, the stranger may simply have told them. If not, for most contemporaries, an 'Irish' person was someone who sounded Irish, looked Irish, acted Irish, and perhaps who lived in an Irish neighbourhood – or some combination of the above. This chapter looks at how contemporaries used those criteria to identify the Irish.

#### ***Auditory Evidence***

Outsiders typically give themselves away the moment they open their mouths. London at the turn of the nineteenth century was officially monolingual. Though the foulmouthed labourer that worked the dockyards had a different vocabulary than did the Westminster courtier, they both spoke English. Ireland, on the other hand, was bilingual and its people spoke both English and Irish Gaelic (referred to hereafter as 'Irish'). English was the language of all things official in Ireland;

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<sup>1</sup> 'September 1813, trial of James Leary (t18130915-3)', *OBPO*.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Mayhew, writing of the 1840s, quoted an innkeeper who declared he would 'rather have twenty poor Englishmen drunk in my tap-room than a couple of poor Irishmen. They'll quarrel with anybody – the Irish will – and sometimes clear the room'. The innkeeper inherently believed he could tell the difference between the two groups – and incidentally that he was not particularly fond of the latter's patronage. Henry Mayhew, *London Labour*, 114. Quoted in Feheney, 'Delinquency', 319-329.

<sup>3</sup> 'September 1815, trial of Thomas Stevens (t18150913-181)', *OBPO*.

<sup>4</sup> Janice Turner, "'Ill-Favoured sluts'? – The Disorderly Women of Rosemary Lane and Rag Fair", *The London Journal*, 38 (2013), 97; 'October 1730, trial of Margaret Eaton (t17301014-76)', *OBPO*.

the government and much of the activity in urban centres such as Dublin was conducted in English. The people of Ireland's southeastern province of Leinster were predominantly English-speaking thanks to centuries of English settlement and conquest in the region.

However, the west and south of Ireland were predominantly Irish-speaking. Garret FitzGerald's detailed maps of Irish-speakers by barony in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland show that the language was alive and well at this time, particularly in certain corners of the island. In some areas of Connaught in the west, over nine-tenths of the people could and likely did speak Irish, a trend that only began to fade well into the nineteenth century. Munster in the southwest and certain areas of South Leinster – Kilkenny in particular – were Irish-speaking strongholds.<sup>5</sup> Though many of these people may have been bilingual, a traveler to Kilkenny in 1815 expressed surprise at the number of farmers in the area who spoke only Irish, even on fairly prosperous farms.<sup>6</sup> Apart from Kilkenny, most of south Leinster was an English-speaking bastion.

For the ear of a Londoner, nothing would have shouted 'foreigner' louder than overhearing an unintelligible burst of Irish from the mouth of a stranger. We know the Irish language found its way onto London's streets – at least occasionally. References to people using the Irish language are not difficult to track down in contemporary sources. During the trial of Bridget and Margaret Dunn in 1805 for example, a witness accused the pair of conspiring together in Irish after being caught stealing, assuming wrongly that their captors would not be able to understand them.<sup>7</sup>

It would seem that Irish was spoken often enough in London that many people could at least identify it as Irish, even if they could not understand what they had

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<sup>5</sup> Garret FitzGerald, 'Estimates for Baronies of Minimum Level of Irish-Speaking Amongst Successive Decennial Cohorts: 1771-1781 to 1861-1871' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 84C (1984), 127; Garret FitzGerald, 'Irish-Speaking in the Pre-Famine Period: A Study Based on the 1911 Census Data for People Born before 1851 and Still Alive in 1911', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 103C (2003), 191-283.

<sup>6</sup> Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, 28.

<sup>7</sup> 'July 1805, trial of Bridget Dunn and Margaret Dunn (t18050710-5)', *OBPO*.

heard. However, as a primarily oral culture, Irish is particularly difficult for historians of London to track. David Dickson shows that literacy in Irish was not high enough to support a large Irish-language print industry, limiting printed Irish works almost exclusively to Catholic devotional literature until the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> We can however begin to estimate its prevalence by considering migration patterns from Irish-speaking areas into London. Roger Swift argues that migration between Ireland and Britain tended to go directly east. This means those in Ulster and Connaught were more likely to end up in Scotland or northern England. Those from northern Leinster found their way to the Midlands, and those from south Leinster or Munster headed to the south of England, which included London.<sup>9</sup> More recent work by Smith and MacRaild confirms this general trend, though the pair hastens to warn that there were widespread exceptions to the pattern.<sup>10</sup>

A sample of 2,235 Irish vagrant families removed from the London area between 1778 and 1786 show that, even if too simplistic, Swift's trends are helpful for understanding Irish migration to London. Forty-five per cent of these vagrants hailed from the predominantly Irish-speaking provinces of Munster in the south or Connaught in the west. That jumps to forty-eight per cent if you include Kilkenny in south Leinster. Obviously not everyone from those regions spoke Irish as their first language, or even knew Irish at all. However, these proportions suggest that about half of this set of lower-class failed migrants to London came from areas of Ireland in which the Irish language was prevalent. That also means about half did not, with nearly a quarter of all vagrants in the sample coming from County Dublin alone, which was known for speaking English.<sup>11</sup>

Though inexact, these migration patterns suggest that a large proportion of migrants to the London area could speak Irish; how many did so as their preferred language is difficult to say. Karen Corrigan argues that at least some preferred – or spoke only – Irish, and points to evidence that some people

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<sup>8</sup> David Dickson, *Old World Colony: Cork and South Munster 1630-1830* (Cork: 2005), 212.

<sup>9</sup> Swift, *The Irish in Britain*, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Smith and MacRaild, 'The Origins of the Irish in Northern England', 24-49.

<sup>11</sup> Based on an analysis of Crymble, Falcini, and Hitchcock, 'Vagrant Lives'.

migrated to England without any knowledge of the English language at all.<sup>12</sup> The witness named Quinn mentioned above, who was forced to testify through an interpreter is evidence Corrigan's assessment was correct.<sup>13</sup> Mervyn Busted's analysis of Irishness in Manchester suggests that having immigrants come from known Irish-speaking regions increased the likelihood that they would form Gaelic communities. Manchester, according to Busted, reaped many of its Irish immigrants from Ulster, as well as the ultra-Gaelic Connaught. He suggests the ties between these immigrants, which included their language, may have led to clustering and the formation of sub-groups within the new community.<sup>14</sup>

Even if we conservatively assume that most immigrants who dared brave the streets of London had a passable knowledge of English as a second language, in the absence of contradictory evidence, we must assume that those who could do so likely used Irish in the home, amongst acquaintances who all spoke the language, and with those who never learned English. As learning Irish in the early nineteenth century offered little economic or social benefit, the vast majority of those who knew it were native speakers.<sup>15</sup> This means that for the contemporary Londoner, any encounter with the Irish language was a strong indicator of Irishness.

Linguistic historian A.J. Bliss shows that for a London listener, Irish words were not the only way a local could identify an Irish speaker in London. Because modern English arrived in the Irish Pale in the seventeenth century, it developed thereafter in Ireland in relative isolation, apart from English in England and therefore derived some unique characteristics. The large proportion of native Irish-speakers in the late seventeenth century who struggled to learn English left their mark on the language as it was spoken in Ireland.<sup>16</sup> In some circumstances the syntax of Irish differs significantly from that of English. For example, the

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<sup>12</sup> Karen P. Corrigan, 'I Gcuntas Dé Múin Béarla Do Na Leanbháin: Eismirce Agus an Ghaeilge Sa Naoú Aois Déag', in Patrick O'Sullivan' *The Irish in the New Communities* (Leicester, 1992), 149–150 (the article is in English).

<sup>13</sup> 'July 1816, trial of Dennis Roerdon, Thomas Collett, James Quinn (t18160710-22)', *OBPO*.

<sup>14</sup> M.A. Busted, *Patterns of Irishness in Nineteenth Century Manchester* (Manchester, 2001), 13.

<sup>15</sup> FitzGerald, 'Irish-Speaking', 118.

<sup>16</sup> A.J. Bliss, 'Languages in Contact: Some Problems of Hiberno-English', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 72 (1972), 63.

imperative ('Come here!' or 'Sit down!') has six forms in Irish and only two in English. As Bliss points out, this led to many native Irish speakers mistakenly translating the more rich Irish imperative word-for-word into English, which resulted in sentences such as: 'Let you stay here till I come back!' or 'Leave ye not forget the toast!'<sup>17</sup> This linguistic construction still exists in English in some circumstances: 'Let go!' for example, but if it is used as in the idiomatic mistranslations above, it is definitely an indicator of a non-native English speaker. Contemporaries did appear to pick up on these idiomatic differences in Irish word-use. Henry Mayhew, writing of the 1840s, noted the Irish preference for the term 'making your soul' as opposed to 'saving your soul'.<sup>18</sup> Mayhew's ability to link the idiom to the Irish shows that at least in some cases, contemporaries did recognise the subtle differences in Irish speech patterns. This is a significant leap from merely being able to identify a grammatical error as a foreign speech pattern, and suggests speech was an indicator of Irishness in London.

Of course the words were not the only such auditory indicator of Irishness. Accent is just as important, if not more so. People who grow up in the same community usually either share the same accent, or in the case of London, have one of the many accents that are primarily dictated by where in London one lives, or with which social crowd one associates. Locals can usually recognise and place the accents of others, assuming a certain threshold of repeated exposure. Even without repeated exposure, most people would be able to determine if a person's accent was different from their own.

Native speakers of the Irish language were confronted with a considerable challenge when learning English. The phonemes, or sounds that make up the English language, are slightly different than those that make up the Irish language. English has more distinct vowel sounds and Irish has more consonant sounds, clearly distinguishing between various pronunciations of the letter 'L'

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<sup>17</sup> Bliss, 'Languages in Contact', 72.

<sup>18</sup> Mayhew, *London Labour*, 45.

that to an English speaker sound identical.<sup>19</sup> Learning a new language with a different set of phonemes is a real challenge, as some suggest we lose our ability to distinguish between phonemes that are not part of our native language. This explains why Japanese speakers of English are often teased for pronouncing the English 'L' sound in a way that sounds like 'R' to an English native speaker: 'Rondon' instead of 'London' and 'Engrish' for 'English'.<sup>20</sup> It also explains why in the Tourmakeady accent of county Mayo in Ireland, the vowel sounds in 'lads' and 'lodge' are suspiciously similar to an English person's ear.<sup>21</sup>

Despite a complete lack of audio or video recordings, historical sources verify that there was a distinct historical Irish accent – or more probably, several distinct Irish accents. Shakespeare offers perhaps the earliest written evidence in his play, *Henry V*, first performed in the late Elizabethan era. In the play the speech of the three military captains, Fluellen, MacMorris and Jamy (Welsh, Irish, and Scottish respectively), are written with different heavy accents. MacMorris, the Irish captain is given an Irish brogue, which according to Shakespeare, overused 'sh' in place of the English 's' sound:

Of my nation! What ish my nation? Ish a villain, and a bastard, and a knave, and a rascal. What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?<sup>22</sup>

This emphasis on 'sh' as an Irish linguistic trait appears again in 1725 in the trial account of Susan Grimes in the proceedings in the Old Bailey, London's criminal court. Grimes had been accused of stealing the watch of Irishman-turned-Londoner, James Fitzgerald. The writer who transcribed the trial was clearly delighted by what he heard emanate from the Irishman's mouth and transcribed the speech to emphasise how the man's language sounded, rather than what he meant. Fitzgerald's testimony of his interactions with Grimes in her lodging house are recorded thus:

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<sup>19</sup> Bliss, 'Languages in Contact', 64.

<sup>20</sup> For evidence of adults and phoneme distinction, see Donald M. Morehead, 'Processing of Phonological Sequences by Young Children and Adults', *Child Development*, 42 (1971), 288.

<sup>21</sup> Bliss, 'Languages in Contact', 66.

<sup>22</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*, Act III, scene ii.

But ash to the Preceshoner, she wash after making me shit upon the Bed with her, and sho tumble together; but I wash after shitting in the Chair, and then she was coming to shit in my Lap; but I would not let her, and sho she shit beside me; and then I wash hoping that she would be eashy; but for all that she would not let me shit at quiet.<sup>23</sup>

Even more explicitly and during our period of interest, Henry Browning swore before the Old Bailey court in 1820 of Eliza Dillon that he ‘observed by her brogue that she was Irish’.<sup>24</sup> Whether she was in fact Irish, we do not know. However, this example clearly shows that Browning believed he could identify an Irish person from their accent. Nearly a century earlier we see another clear example. In 1736, during the Shoreditch and Spitalfields riots, a brewer’s cooper, Richard Burton wrote of the mob ‘they said they knew I was not Irish by my Tongue, and I should not be hurt’. While Burton gives no details of what an Irish tongue sounds like, his claim leaves little doubt that to contemporaries, an Irish accent was a distinguishable trait in London, and one that could bring you to personal harm in certain unpleasant times.<sup>25</sup>

Over a century later, Henry Mayhew transcribed a similar example to that which appeared in the Old Bailey – though one that was less humorous than some of those above. Writing about the rag fair in the east of London in the 1840s and 50s, Mayhew commented that whilst walking in the area, one was certain to hear the cries of vendors proclaiming to have the ‘sheapest pargains’. Mayhew associates the accent with the ‘native Irish’ who have come to live in London.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, not all Irish people did or do pronounce their ‘ch’ thus. In fact, it is possible that the Irish accent at the time did not include an overemphasised ‘sh’ sound at all, and that instead it became a cultural cliché that was undeservedly attached to the Irish community. It may have been linked with a particular region of Ireland, or a particular class of Irish person – even one of the major Irish religious groups. However, in this case, perception is as good as reality. The fact

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<sup>23</sup> ‘7 April 1725, trial of Susan Grimes (t17250407-66)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>24</sup> ‘March 2011. January 1820, trial of William Petley (t18200112-89)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in: George Rudé, *Paris and London in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Studies in Popular Protest* (London, 1970), 210.

<sup>26</sup> Mayhew, *London*, 11.



that it appears to have been commonly accepted that Irish people sounded differently shows that an Irish accent was an indicator of Irishness for contemporaries. Presumably, this skill of identifying an Irish accent was widespread, as in the 1725 example above, the trial account of Susan Grimes was written for popular consumption as part of the *Old Bailey Proceedings*. For the writer's phonetic spelling of Mr. Fitzgerald's accent to be effective as a form of humour, he would have had to be reasonably confident that his audience would recognise the sounds as representative of an Irish accent, as opposed to wanton misspelling.

Evidence from Ireland also supports the claim of a distinct historical Irish accent. According to Toby Barnard, New English families living in eighteenth-century Ireland often worried about what an Irish brogue would do to limit their children in English society, and students sent to study in England reported being teased for their accent.<sup>27</sup> Paul Langford provides an explanation for this concern from parents: writing about politeness, he shows that the English middling sort actively encouraged a particular de-regionalised accent by the early nineteenth century, which was meant to act as a mark of respectability.<sup>28</sup> This English cultural phenomenon may not have translated into the Irish frame of mind, or may simply have been difficult to adopt for the Irish students. The fact that these examples stretch back to the end of the sixteenth century and that accents are still with us today leaves little doubt that Irish accents were noticeable on the streets of early nineteenth-century London.

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<sup>27</sup> Barnard, 'Protestantism, Ethnicity and Irish Identities', 216.

<sup>28</sup> P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), 116.

## ***Visual Evidence***

*A man pretending to ride a horse trots past two medieval peasants.*

1<sup>st</sup> Peasant: *Who's that then?*

2<sup>nd</sup> Peasant: *I dunno, must be a king.*

1<sup>st</sup> Peasant: *Why?*

2<sup>nd</sup> Peasant: *He hasn't got shit all over him*

*Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)*<sup>29</sup>

We often make assumptions about someone based on their appearance. We found these assumptions both on how someone is dressed, and also on their physical characteristics. As with all stereotypes, conclusions established on appearance are often incorrect when applied to the individual. Nevertheless, in many cases they do provide truisms about everything from relative social status, to employment, to cultural beliefs, to possible origin.

Clothing can be an excellent indicator of social status, profession and cultural affiliation. Not all clothes provided all indicators, but the connections were fairly strong. For example, one might expect to find a nineteenth-century soldier in a redcoat rather than an apron – though wearing an apron did not mean someone was not a soldier – and rich women tended to wear more extravagant clothing than poor women. There are of course problems with identifying someone by clothing. It was not uncommon for the red military uniforms of ex-soldiers to find themselves on the backs of poor children who had received them secondhand. Nevertheless, despite this and other anomalies, the historical evidence suggests clothing was generally an excellent indicator of profession or social status; however, that same evidence suggests it was generally an unreliable indicator of Irishness – at least so far as we can tell.

Historically clothing played a functional role in European society to clearly identify those with certain rights and privileges. In France for example, clothing was so linked to social status that from 1485 to 1660 it was illegal to wear

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<sup>29</sup> *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, dirs. Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones (1975).

clothing or ornamentation – including swords – deemed above one's social station.<sup>30</sup> This was because the nobility and upper clergy wanted to ensure everyone knew who they were and treated them accordingly. On the other hand, there were also practical reasons for certain types of dress related to occupation: a heavy apron to protect a blacksmith or a sunbonnet to shade female fieldworkers, for example. We can see from contemporary sketches by Henry William Pyne and others that this type of profession-based dress was common in the early nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> However, no studies of occupational clothing have sought to differentiate Irish workers from English workers within the same profession, based on their dress. Contemporaries had an intimate knowledge of their society that we can never hope to replicate in full, and it is possible that many subtleties have been lost to us. Without this evidence we can neither confirm nor deny that occupational dress could be used to link someone to Irish origin.

Unlike the functional occupational clothing, the dress of the wealthy in the early nineteenth century was ornate beyond belief.<sup>32</sup> No one who looked at the court attire from the period would ever question the connection between wealth and dress – though highwaymen such as Irishman James Maclaine were able to dress the part due to their endless cons, which shows that even high fashion cannot always be relied upon as a social indicator.<sup>33</sup> There was a small group of wealthy Irish immigrants in London, many of whom were connected to the Irish parliament that relocated to Westminster in 1801, the absentee landowners who preferred London life, or the young lawyers who came to the Inns of Court to learn the law.<sup>34</sup> As was the case with occupational clothing, it is unclear whether or not a wealthy Irish person dressed differently than his or her English counterpart. The evidence suggests that if there were differences, they were subtle. Since the sixteenth century, Irish high fashion – both men's and women's

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1994), 49.

<sup>31</sup> W.H. Pyne, *The Costume of Great Britain* (London, 1808).

<sup>32</sup> For good examples of court dress see: Lucy Johnston, *Nineteenth-Century Fashion in Detail*, (London, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> 'Maclaine [Maclean], James (1724-1750), highwayman', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2006), accessed 14 June 2011.

<sup>34</sup> See Craig Bailey, *Irish London*.

– had mimicked that of either England or of France, rather than producing a distinct style of their own.<sup>35</sup> However, we should not quickly dismiss the idea that contemporaries could tell the difference, particularly those with an acute interest in fashion. London fashions took time to reach Dublin and it is entirely reasonable to assume that by the time they found their way into Irish hands the people of London had a slightly newer style. That suggests wealthy Irish persons arriving in London may have been distinguishable (or at least slightly unfashionable), if only just until they could get to the seamstress.

Unfortunately for historians, very few examples of lower-class clothing from the early nineteenth century survive. This is because of the moth's taste for wool, which was commonly worn by the lower orders. The wealthy tended to opt instead for linen, cotton and canvas.<sup>36</sup> Upper-class clothing was ornate enough to catch the eye of collectors and was more likely to find its way into our modern museums than the clothing of the poor, which was often worn until it was rags, whereupon it was recycled into a cleaning implement, until it turned to dust. Fortunately, evidence of what the middling sort and the poor wore has survived in other forms: through written descriptions and visual representations in art.

John Styles' book, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (2007) is the best resource for descriptions of lower-class attire. Though the title suggests that it is strictly applicable to the eighteenth century, much of the work looks at the period post-1775, right up to the end of the long eighteenth century. Could locals distinguish between the Irish poor and the English poor by their dress? It would appear that the answer is yes. Styles points to the writings of agriculturalist, Arthur Young for proof. Young, while travelling in Ireland from 1776 to 1778, declared that compared to the English poor, the Irish poor dressed in rags; Young commented that in England, even the beggars had hats and shoes, whereas in Ireland those well above beggarliness were often barefoot.<sup>37</sup> This reflects a general trend for which the English were known in Europe at this time;

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<sup>35</sup> Mairead Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland* (London, 1989), 43-124.

<sup>36</sup> Roche, *The Culture of Clothing*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2007), 20.

the English poor spent their money on clothes, as clothing for the English held greater social significance, whereas the poor in Ireland and elsewhere spent their money on food.<sup>38</sup> What this means is that immigrants who had just arrived in London from Ireland would almost certainly have been immediately distinguishable by locals because of their dress. But, while locals perhaps knew the Irish poor were not wearing local fashion, they may not have identified the poor as Irish. Instead, a beggar in rags may simply have been identified as foreign or as an 'other', which is another identity entirely. This distinction as 'other' is noteworthy, but is not a definitive indicator of Irishness.

As with the wealthy, the lack of evidence is not proof that clothing was not a strong indicator of Irishness. There certainly was strong evidence of regional variation in terms of Welsh and Scottish attire, as compared to English fashions. Welsh women commonly wore an outfit that was distinct from that worn by both the Irish and English.<sup>39</sup> And the Scottish kilt, though it had English origins, is perhaps the most recognisable modern example of regional differences in attire in the British Isles.<sup>40</sup> In Ireland the clothing examples examined by historians are less clear, though we do get some clues. An English traveler to Kilkenny in 1815 remarked that on certain Irish-speaking farms, the clothing differed from the more modernised apparel worn in the north and the east of the country. Specifically, he noted that the frieze coat was still popular amongst this group, despite a change in tastes elsewhere.<sup>41</sup>

An Irish painting featured in Mairead Dunlevy's book on the dress of Ireland depicts a woman in a Polonaise dress, which was also popular in England in the late eighteenth century.<sup>42</sup> The painting itself does not matter enough to warrant reproducing it here; what matters is how contemporaries would have interpreted the woman had they encountered her. It is not surprising that we would find her wearing English fashions; as noted, the Irish tended to adopt

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<sup>38</sup> Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present Station of that Kingdom, Made in the Years 1776, 1777, 1778*. Quoted in Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, 137.

<sup>39</sup> Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, 137.

<sup>40</sup> Styles, *The Dress of the People*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, 137.

English fashions. For a contemporary, however, the Irishness of the woman in the painting may have been painfully obvious. Perhaps how she wore the dress, the colours it incorporated, the year in which she wore it, or even the contexts in which she wore it may have been extremely Irish. Unfortunately, the passage of time has rendered these distinctions mute and we as historians are left to postulate.

For the historian, clothing as an indicator of Irishness is therefore inconclusive. If we make the liberal assumption that to a contemporary, there were distinctions between Irish and English dress – subtle though they may have been, the question remains: how long would immigrants have retained their distinct clothing style? According to Dunlevy, for the poor it may have been several years before a wardrobe was entirely replaced. Clothing was still very expensive and a labourer may have only hoped to replace items of clothing once every two or three years.<sup>43</sup> Those with young, growing children may have waited even longer to replace their own clothes, as resources instead went to their offspring.

It would seem that for contemporary Londoners, it was likely that those with an eye for fashion noticed outsiders arriving in unfashionable or foreign clothing. However, it is unclear if clothing was a distinct mark of Irishness. Nevertheless, it cannot be discounted without further study and must be regarded as a possible indicator of Irishness, even if it was not one that was particularly strong or reliable.

Less changeable than dress, but equally visible are physical features. Though many readers will rightly question how reliable the physical differences between the Irish and the English could be, it is clear that some contemporaries considered them obvious. Which physical features actually corresponded with Irishness, we may never know exactly. At least one account suggests Irish men of the early nineteenth century were well endowed. A William Price allegedly asked William Cane if he ‘was large, as Irishmen were in general’ as Price reached for

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<sup>43</sup> Avril Hart and Susan North, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Fashion in Detail* (London, 2009), 66.

the man's small clothes.<sup>44</sup> While I am sure many Irish men would happily agree to Price's assessment, such a characteristic, if true, was hardly a useful measure of Irishness in most everyday encounters.

Surely identifying an Irishman in London was more difficult than identifying a black man in London. Nevertheless there is ample evidence of perceived 'Irish' characteristics stretching back for centuries. In 1620, William Lithgow compared the Irish to the Khoikhoi, a South African tribe known colloquially as the 'Hottentots'.<sup>45</sup> The Hottentots were stereotypically depicted with thick lips and flat noses, features that contemporaries in Britain associated with savageness. A century later in 1726, Anglo-Irish writer Jonathan Swift gave the Yahoos of *Gulliver's Travels* these same 'savage' features, as well as the savage behaviours contemporary readers expected to accompany them. Claude Rawson argues that Swift's Yahoos were an unflattering satirical reference to the Irish lower orders.<sup>46</sup> The perceived connections between the Irish and other disdained foreign groups were long rooted in English writing. Edmund Spenser, writing in the sixteenth century, had written that he believed the 'untamed Irish' had origins with the hated usurping Scythians of ancient Iran, as well as the Gauls (French) and Spanish – England's contemporary bitter enemies. Spenser even linked the Irish to the Muslim Moors who were naturally targets of suspicion to those of seventeenth-century Christendom. These connections, which may have had no basis in reality, provided a convenient way to distinguish the Irish from the English in the English psyche.<sup>47</sup>

Political caricatures are one of the most prevalent types of visual evidence historians have of these over-exaggerated Irish features. When we look at these caricatures, we find that the Hottentot stereotype was particularly prevalent, especially during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and later in the Victorian era. The use of simian features plays on the idea that the Irish were somehow less

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<sup>44</sup> 'July 1810, trial of William Cane (t18100718-66)', *OBPO*.

<sup>45</sup> Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, 139.

<sup>46</sup> Claude Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination 1492-1945* (Oxford, 2001), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Noonan, 'The Cruell Pressure', 154-177.

evolved than the English; however, these same simian faces were commonly used in British caricatures of the French during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era. Rather than a literal suggestion that the Irish and French looked like monkeys, these caricatures instead indicate a foe or outsider and represent an artistic convention as opposed to a literal implication of how people from elsewhere looked. These types of caricatures often depict a violent act by the ape-man and were a uniting tool used by the English cartoonists during times of war or rebellion.<sup>48</sup>

As with all caricatures, the targets of ridicule are depicted in a way that emphasises the characteristics being ridiculed; there are many examples of what Vic Gatrell calls the peddling of innocent jokes, in which the Irish look like anything from a harmless fool, to a drunkard, to an entirely ordinary looking person.<sup>49</sup> Caricature historians Douglas, Harte and O'Hara stress in their work *Drawing Conclusions: A Cartoon History of Anglo-Irish Relations, 1798-1998*, that cartoons were not a prime driver of public opinion; rather, they were a barometer of opinion. Artists knew that to maintain their audience, they could not stray too far from the opinions of their readers; else they would lose their audience and lose their jobs.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, we should not look at the simian features as an indication of how the Irish may have actually looked; instead it was a commentary on the perceived violent nature of Irish rebels.

The idea that physical features could be connected to personality traits and characteristics was strong in some circles in nineteenth-century Britain. This pseudoscience, known as physiognomy, was popular, even if it was not universally accepted in the nineteenth century. Today most would consider such classifications to be motivated by racism and xenophobia. Those who supported it in the past seemed to honestly believe what they were looking at was a form of science. How far belief in this pseudoscience extended, or in phrenology – a

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<sup>48</sup> Excellent examples include: James Gillray, 'We Fly on the Wings' (6 March 1798), 9183, *British Museum*; James Gillray, 'United Irishmen upon Duty', (12 June 1798), 9228, *British Museum*.

<sup>49</sup> Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth Century London* (London, 2006), 246.

<sup>50</sup> Roy Douglas, Liam Harte, and Jim O'Hara, *Drawing Conclusions: A Cartoon History of Anglo-Irish Relations, 1798-1998* (Belfast, 1998), 2.



similar study that focused on the dimensions of the skull – is impossible to say; however, we would be wise not to dismiss it based on our own beliefs. In 1846 Prince Albert hired a phrenologist to measure the bumps on his son's head in a bid to understand why the boy resisted his educational programme.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, in 1847, one of the characters of *Jane Eyre* remarked, 'I am a judge of physiognomy, and in hers I see all the faults of her class'.<sup>52</sup> Though Brontë's reference to physiognomy in *Jane Eyre* may have been tongue in cheek, by midcentury at least, these examples show that these two fields were beginning to show evidence of popular acceptance in some circles. Some physiognomists and phrenologists worked hard to prove the scientific value of the field. This is perhaps best demonstrated by James Cross' 1817 book, *An Attempt to Establish Physiognomy Upon Scientific Principles*.<sup>53</sup> In the Victorian era, books on physiognomy and phrenology vastly outsold Darwin's *Origin of Species*.<sup>54</sup> The attitudes of physiognomists and nineteenth-century bigots alike tend to come out in books about the physiognomy of certain groups of people, or through caricature.

These books are inclined to be overtly racist, xenophobic and divisive, even by nineteenth-century standards, and may not have held much sway with contemporaries – though they were widely read. A prominent American example likens the Irish to dogs, using hand-drawn sketches of Irish faces, with features drastically exaggerated to resemble dogs as proof of the claim. The evidence for the physiognomical link is supported by the author's claim that the Irishman has a tendency to wail and howl in parliament and that the 'consciousness of the Irishman adapts him to domestic life, to which the dog is suited'.<sup>55</sup> The same author used a hand-drawn sketch of a child-like 'Ethiopian' to conclude that Ethiopians were child-like, in a book with a thinly veiled racist agenda.<sup>56</sup> Novelist, William Carleton quipped that phrenology was not always a good

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<sup>51</sup> David de Giustino, *Conquest of Mind: Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought* (London, 1975), 1-32 and 220-222.

<sup>52</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (London, 1847), 212.

<sup>53</sup> James Cross, *An Attempt to Establish Physiognomy upon Scientific Principles* (Glasgow, 1817).

<sup>54</sup> de Giustino, *Conquest of Mind*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> de Giustino, *Conquest of Mind*, 3.

<sup>56</sup> James W. Redfield, *Comparative Physiognomy or Resemblances between Men and Animals* (New York, 1852), 16.

method for understanding the Irish head, as ‘many an organ and development is brought out on it by the cudgel that never would have appeared had nature been left to herself’.<sup>57</sup> Despite what is clearly a spectrum of belief about pseudo-sciences such as phrenology, and their lacking of sound scientific evidence, these works show that in the nineteenth century some people believed they could identify foreigners by their physical features and that those physical features could be used to predict character or personality traits.

Even if the Hottentot stereotype, simian features, or physiognomical links applied to the Irish were rooted in latent racism and xenophobia, there likely were physical traits that were more common in Irish persons, as our modern understanding of genetics would suggest. Few readers would dispute a claim that most Irish persons in the early nineteenth century had light skin compared to persons from Africa. Writing in the 1960s, anthropologist Estyn E. Evans suggested that certain groups in Ireland were more likely to share specific physical characteristics. Those in the west of Ireland were more likely to have light eyes and dark hair. Those in Ulster where Scottish immigration was more common were more likely to have light hair.<sup>58</sup>

This is simple genetics and nothing earth-shattering. The fact that genetic traits are passed between generations, and that genetic mixing between the Irish and English in the early nineteenth century was less common than it is in the twenty-first century, means that perhaps contemporaries did notice distinct Irish features that have since disappeared with generations of intermarriage and increased internal migration. Even if this was the case, they could never have been very reliable indicators because within these trends there are significant individual deviations. Hereditary traits are not reliable and there is often more variation within groups than between them.<sup>59</sup> Trends can be useful to explain populations, of course. Evidence gleaned from the recruit lists to the East India Company in the 1770s and 1780s show that on average a recruit from Middlesex County was just over an inch shorter than one from Ireland. Men from

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<sup>57</sup> William Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, 1 (1830), 267-268.

<sup>58</sup> Estyn E. Evans, *The Irishness of the Irish* (Armagh, 1967), 2-3.

<sup>59</sup> Evans, *The Irishness of the Irish*, 2-3.

Northumberland were considerably taller than Londoners by almost three inches.<sup>60</sup> In this case, the claims are fine as a demographic statements about a population, but entirely unreliable on an individual basis.

Claude Rawson succinctly sums up the reliability of physical features for identifying the Irish: 'The English writers who listed specific facial and other features as descriptive of the Irish must have known, as a matter of daily observation, that the descriptions did not generally fit' and thus we should not put too much faith in the ability of contemporaries to accurately identify the Irish based on physical features.<sup>61</sup> Despite this, it is clear is that in early nineteenth-century London, there was a group of people who *thought* they were able to identify the Irish from their physical characteristics. Whether these people could accurately do so is another matter, and one that we will never be able to truly test.

### ***Cultural Characteristics***

Cultural evidence was also available for contemporaries. How did the Irish act? What did they like to do, or consume? What did they believe? What type of work did they do? The answers to these questions are of course: they acted like individuals, liked to do a vast array of activities, consume wildly different commodities, held entirely different beliefs from one another and worked in a wide range of professions. Nevertheless, as with all populations, there are trending features, which contemporaries may have used to identify the Irish. Some cultural factors may forever be lost to the historian. These might include any number of things, ranging from the perceived preference of Irish persons for a particular type of drink at the pub, to a tendency to whistle (or not), to an affinity for certain types of food – perhaps the potato. These types of subtle indicators may have been things that were used subconsciously by contemporaries to label people. They almost certainly changed frequently

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<sup>60</sup> Joel Mokyr and Cormac Ó Gráda, 'The Height of Irishmen and Englishmen in the 1770s', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 4 (1989), 90.

<sup>61</sup> Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide*, 4.

throughout the years, and could not have been anywhere near entirely accurate when used to identify the Irish.

Other cultural characteristics (or stereotypes) were more stable. The Catholic religion, to which most Irish persons subscribed, was a cultural indicator that was often tied to Irishness in London. After the Catholic Relief Act of 1791, Catholic chapels were legal in England, though they had to be certified at Quarter Sessions and faced a series of restrictions including a ban on locked doors during worship. Despite this new law, Catholics were not openly accepted as equals under the law and faced restrictions until 1829. This means there are few reliable records available that detail the activities of the Catholic Church in London during this time. Some wealthy Catholics would have been able to worship in the chapels of foreign embassies in the city. As these embassies were considered foreign soil, English laws did not apply and Catholicism would have existed in these enclaves even before 1791. Likewise, there were priests without parishes who wandered the city quietly administering the Catholic religion. These priests, known as ‘couple beggars’, performed clandestine marriages for those of the Catholic faith.<sup>62</sup>

The pressure on Irish immigrants from other Irish in Britain to stay true to their Catholic religion seems to have been strong. Marriage records from Manchester suggest this was the case; in 1842, eighty-nine per cent of Irish persons getting married did so to other Irish persons.<sup>63</sup> While similar numbers for London have yet to be compiled, that statistic is striking, and it demonstrates that either Catholicism remained an integral part of Irish life in England, or that the Irish stuck together – willingly or not. Within Ireland, mixed marriages between people of different religious groups were frowned upon and many were forced to turn to the couple beggars to be married.<sup>64</sup> This social stigma alone may have impacted the decisions of some people to keep to their own religion when seeking a mate, so we cannot read too deeply into this trend in terms of knowing someone’s true religiosity.

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<sup>62</sup> Ian McBride, ‘Catholic Politics in the Penal Era’, 35.

<sup>63</sup> Busteed and Hodgson, ‘Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life’, 148.

<sup>64</sup> S.J. Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland 1780-1845* (New York, 1982), 200.

The case may be that both are true: the Irish felt pressure to remain actively Catholic, and pockets of the Irish communities which popped up around London tended to stick together. Connections between English Catholics and Irish Catholics, particularly in the Victorian era, may not have had the same strengths as those within the Irish Catholic networks. According to Sheridan Gilley, the Victorian era English Catholic Church was more interested in converting the English than forming bonds with the Catholic Irish.<sup>65</sup> This lack of connection between English and Irish Catholics may have led to the low church attendance amongst Irish Catholics in England by mid-century.<sup>66</sup> It is not clear if this was also the case in the early decades of the nineteenth century, but as is so frequent in this chapter, this adds yet another confounding variable to our understanding of Irishness. At least to Catholics in England, there was a noticeable difference between an English Catholic and an Irish one.

Cultural characteristics did not stop at Catholicism. Most eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century people in Ireland were small-scale farmers. Obviously few of their agricultural skills were marketable in urban London. Those with slightly more money tended to opt for emigration to North America, where it was perceived the opportunities were greater. This meant that the Irish that ended up in London tended to be unskilled and poor, were likely illiterate and/or innumerate and may have been caring for small children.<sup>67</sup> Desperate for work and accustomed to inferior living conditions at home in Ireland, they developed a reputation for undercutting the wages of the locals. These wages were barely able to sustain the poor workers, meaning the Irish had little hope of ever raising themselves from their bleak station.<sup>68</sup> Though economic historian Jeffrey G. Williamson has shown that the downward pressure on the economy caused by the Irish was negligible, it is the perception of contemporaries that is most important, not the economic truth.<sup>69</sup> Feeling threatened by this labour

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<sup>65</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People*, 200.

<sup>66</sup> Davis, *The Irish in Britain*, 141.

<sup>67</sup> Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 42-43.

<sup>68</sup> De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, 19.

<sup>69</sup> Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'The Impact of the Irish on British Labour Markets During the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Economic History*, 46 (1986), 693-720.

competition from abroad, the locals took exception and rioted in 1736 against the Irish and Irish businesses in Shoreditch and Spitalfields, London.<sup>70</sup>

For contemporary locals, certain professions centring on unskilled labour were associated with Irishness. Adam Smith specifically singles out 'chairmen, porters and coal-heavers' as well as 'those unfortunate women who live by prostitution' as London professions in which the majority of workers came from the lower orders of Ireland.<sup>71</sup> Tim Hitchcock notes that Irish and Welsh women dominated the milk delivery business.<sup>72</sup> And even though they made up only a tenth of the railroad workforce by mid-century, the 'railway navvy' gangs of the nineteenth century were often associated with the Irish, as were other manual labour industries, such as dockhands in London's east end.<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately, the low wages, and in many cases lack of steady work, meant that the Irish also developed a reputation for petty crime, such as drunken fighting, disorderly behaviour, and begging. As these are particularly visible activities, Irish petty criminals and beggars probably made it outwardly seem like Irish crime was worse than it actually was.<sup>74</sup> The Irish criminal is a central theme in the historiography of nineteenth-century Irish in Britain. What these studies have shown is that Irishness was in many cases linked to poverty, which in turn was linked to criminality. Victorian writers made it clear that they believed that based on their population the Irish were over-represented in London.<sup>75</sup> The fact that people claimed the Irish were over-represented in crime is telling of the perception of the nineteenth-century Irish. The final section of this thesis will look in greater detail at this particular aspect of the Irish reputation.

One Irish immigrant found a way to make this particular stereotype work to his advantage. Philip Skelton, upon arriving in London in 1748, recounted a man dressed up as a 'wild Irishman, a hideous figure, with a chain about him, cutting

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<sup>70</sup> Rudé, *Paris and London*, 204-206.

<sup>71</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Colin Muir and David Widger (eds.), (Project Gutenberg, 2009), book 1: Chapter XI, Part 1.

<sup>72</sup> Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London* (London, 2007), chapter 8.

<sup>73</sup> Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration', 374.

<sup>74</sup> Swift, 'Heroes or Villains', 403.

<sup>75</sup> Feheney, 'Delinquency', 322.

his capers before a gaping multitude'. After the crowd had dispersed, a passer-by recognised the wildling and called out to him only to discover that he was a rather eloquent Irish actor who had become destitute and had turned to this form of theatrics to earn a living.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Physical Space***

The physical space of London had meaning to contemporaries. Their local knowledge told them that particular activities tended to occur and certain types of people tended to congregate in specific parts of town. For example, the presence of certain types of shops – low public houses, pawnbrokers, and secondhand clothing shops – indicated that an area may have been one of disrepute.<sup>77</sup> To some extent, this local knowledge of the geography of the city could have been a means for identifying the Irish, or at least indicating that there was an increased likelihood of Irish people nearby. According to Sheridan Gilley, the areas of London that had attracted immigrants changed very little between the Elizabethan era and the early nineteenth century. This meant that newcomers would have been more prevalent on some streets than others.<sup>78</sup>

Irish enclaves were many in nineteenth-century London. The most famous enclave was the rookery of St. Giles-in-the-Fields to the west of the City of London, which was practically synonymous with Irishness and poverty.<sup>79</sup> According to Hollen Lees, the Irish officially appeared in the written record of St. Giles-in-the-Fields by the 1640s. However, she notes it was by no means the only Irish enclave, and opts to add Whitechapel, St. Olave, and Southwark to the list. She also adds suburban areas such as St. John, Notting Hill, and St. George and

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<sup>76</sup> Philip Skelton, Samuel Burdy, and Robert Lynam, *The Complete Works of the Late Rev. Philip Skelton, Rector of Fintona: Life of the Rev. Philip Skelton with some curious anecdotes* (1824), lxiii.

<sup>77</sup> Heather Shore, 'Mean Streets: Criminality, Immorality and the Street in Early Nineteenth-Century London' in Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore (eds.), *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink* (London, 2003), 152.

<sup>78</sup> Shore, 'Mean Streets', 153-154.

<sup>79</sup> Rowland Dobie, *The History of the United Parishes of St. Giles in the Fields and St. George Bloomsbury* (London, 1829); *Report from the Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders in the Metropolis* (London, 1816), 1-4.

Camberwell where some of the wealthier Irish families could be found.<sup>80</sup> Jerry White adds several more streets to the list, including: the docks, the Westminster slums near Great Peter Street, the Gray's Inn Lane area around Baldwin's Gardens, the borough west of the Mint, Leyton, West Ham, 'Paddy's Island' in Plaistow, at Putney, and off Orchard Street in Marylebone.<sup>81</sup>

If we consider what Heather Shore calls the 'mean streets' of London, upon which the poorest lived and petty crime flourished, even more regions make the list. These include some already mentioned, but also incorporate "Devil's Acre", Field Lane in Holborn, an area north of the city from Whitecross Street to Golden Lane to Grub Street, and the area around Whitechapel in East London.<sup>82</sup> Tim Hitchcock notes that St. Catherine's, just east of Tower Hill is worth considering. Hitchcock argues that between St. Catherine's, St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and the Borough, half of all poor Irish men, women, and children could be found.<sup>83</sup> George Rudé has his own opinions of Irish areas not yet mentioned, including St. George in the East, St. Andrew Holborn, and Bermondsey-Southwark.<sup>84</sup> The map shown in Figure 3.1 may present some semblance of truth for those seeking the Irish.

It is likely that contemporaries were aware of an increased Irish presence when in these areas – particularly those areas with reputations, such as St. Giles. However, Hitchcock has shown that avoiding these regions offered little protection against encounters with the Irish poor. Many poor beggars were mobile and understood that the best pickings were not in the slums, but along the city's major thoroughfares, such as the Strand, which were crowded with those who had business between Westminster and the City. Starting during the morning rush hour, beggars exited the slums to take up posts where they were

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<sup>80</sup> Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 20.

<sup>81</sup> Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century*, 132.

<sup>82</sup> Shore, 'Mean Streets', 153.

<sup>83</sup> Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, chapter 1.

<sup>84</sup> Rudé, *Paris and London*, 288.





**Figure 3.1: Irish enclaves and urban slums in London.**

Areas of interest highlighted in green, as defined by various historians.<sup>85</sup>

most likely to encounter ‘commuters’. There was no way to avoid the physical spaces these impoverished Irish migrants chose to occupy if one hoped to lead a normal existence in the metropolis.<sup>86</sup>

The Irish chose these regions for a number of reasons. Roger Swift argues that St. Giles-in-the-Fields had a reputation in Ireland for being generous in disseminating poor relief, which attracted the Irish lower orders.<sup>87</sup> In some cases people probably were attracted to places like St. Giles, but it is just as likely that anyone who could afford it simply avoided what was widely known as a slum. Southwark was described in an 1806 guide to London as foul smelling because of the iron works, as was much of the east end, which focused on the maritime industry.<sup>88</sup> Lord Shaftesbury’s account of the prospects of lately arrived migrants at mid-century suggests many of these newest Londoners likely found themselves unwittingly drawn to the slums by cunning lodging-house keepers and the promise of a bargain:

<sup>85</sup> Adapted from: Charles Smith, *Map of London, Westminster & Southwark* (1807).

<sup>86</sup> Tim Hitchcock, ‘The publicity of poverty in early modern London’ in J.F. Merritt (ed.), *Imagining Early Modern London* (Cambridge, 2001), 170.

<sup>87</sup> Swift, ‘Heroes or Villains?’, 408.

<sup>88</sup> Samuel Leigh, *The New Picture of London: or a view of the political, religious, medical, literary, municipal, commercial and moral state of the British Metropolis* (London, 1806), 26.

A young person on his arrival here, full of good intentions to live honestly... alights – and is instantly directed, for the best accommodation, to Duck Lane, St Giles's, Saffron Hill, Spitalfields, or Whitechapel. He reaches the indicated region through tight avenues of glittering fish & rotten vegetables, with doorways or alleys gaping on either side... Yet each [innkeeper] affects to smile with promise, and invites the country-bumpkin to the comfort and repose of 'Lodgings for single men'.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the large Irish populations in many of these neighbourhoods, one must not assume that everyone, or even a majority of people in these areas were Irish. Mervyn Busted's research on nineteenth-century Manchester, which had a much higher concentration of Irish per capita than London, showed that even on the most Irish of streets of Manchester, there lived non-Irish people.<sup>90</sup> Hollen Lees confirms the same for Victorian London. While the Irish did seem to have a preference for certain parishes, they could be found throughout London, including in quite respectable areas.<sup>91</sup> After 1801, the Irish Members of Parliament would have taken up residence in London while parliament was in session. These MPs, along with a small group of gentlemen who moved to London from Ireland, would have possessed a great deal more wealth than the poverty-stricken population living in St. Giles, and like most Londoners lived in the most desirable area they could afford. A small number of skilled artisans who arrived in London from Ireland, would also have avoided the harsh life of the slums, and may have lived in any number of areas where they felt they could succeed at their trade. This group, which Hollen Lees calls 'upwardly mobile', may not have needed the links to the Irish communities that were so vital to the recently arrived poor.<sup>92</sup>

Apart from wealth, there were other forces at work that meant one was likely to find the Irish outside Irish enclaves. The growth of domestic service in the nineteenth century meant that some Irish individuals were able to make their

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<sup>89</sup> Lord Shaftesbury, *Quarterly Review*, 82 (1847), 142-152. Quoted in Sheppard, *The Infernal Wen*, 4-5.

<sup>90</sup> Busted, *Patterns of Irishness*, 13.

<sup>91</sup> Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 20.

<sup>92</sup> Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 53, 58, 18.

way in life living amongst the middle or upper class.<sup>93</sup> By 1851, domestic servants comprised roughly 8.5 per cent of London's population, up slightly from nearly a century before. Tim Meldrum argues that while the majority of domestic servants were women, male servants were much more likely migrants from outside London and the South East, with a disproportionate number coming from Wales, the North and West, and Ireland, attracted by the higher wages available in the city.<sup>94</sup>

No exact numbers of Irish servants in London exist for this period, but we do know that the Irish 'Bridget', or female domestic servant, was a staple throughout nineteenth-century America, with over sixty per cent of Irish-born women in America working in some form of domestic service by 1900. According to Margaret Lynch-Brennan, domestic service attracted women of modest, but not desperate means, and in the American example, they tended to be rural Irish Catholic, unmarried immigrant women, particularly after the Famine era.<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, the same numbers are not available for England at the turn of the nineteenth century, but we would be foolish to discount the presence of these men and women in well-to-do London neighbourhoods. Though they may have been identifiable as Irish through other means, the fact that these particular Irish immigrants lived in English neighbourhoods meant that physical space masked rather than broadcast their Irishness.



None of these indicators was a failsafe for a contemporary attempting to determine the Irishness of a given individual; however, these examples show that there were a number of available criteria and techniques that people could use to create their judgments. It would seem that for a contemporary Londoner, an Irish person was someone who sounded, looked, or acted 'Irish', or who was

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<sup>93</sup> Bronwen Walter, 'Strangers on the Inside: Irish Women Servants in England, 1881' in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.), *Irish Identities in Victorian Britain* (London, 2011), 151-171.

<sup>94</sup> Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household* (London, 2000), 14, 18-19, 190.

<sup>95</sup> Margaret Lynch-Brennan, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840-1930* (Syracuse, New York, 2009), xvii, 1.

seen in an Irish part of town. Individuals would have put different emphasis on the importance of each of these indicators. Because personal opinions and experiences are used to form each person's definition of Irishness, an individual's set of criteria need not have been composed of actual traits of the Irish populace, but simply those aspects, for better or for worse, that the person believed 'Irish' people had. Unfortunately, most of these criteria used by contemporary Londoners to identify the Irish died with the people who made those judgments. Historians must take a considerably different approach to identifying the Irish of the early nineteenth century. The next chapter will do just that, looking at how historians can identify as many Irish individuals as accurately as possible, which allows us to answer questions about the Irish experience in London and the local reaction to Irish people that hitherto have been impossible to unpick.

## 4. Building a Tool for Finding the Irish

ANN ADAMS, alias RILEY, was indicted for a Misdemeanor. Not Guilty.

*London Jury, before Mr. Recorder.<sup>1</sup>*

Was Ann Adams Irish – meaning Irish born or of Irish descent? The above is a London criminal trial described in the *Old Bailey Proceedings (OBP)* and is a typical example of the type of record with which early nineteenth-century historians of the Irish in Britain are faced. From this record, researchers must decide the national identity of the person mentioned therein. Unfortunately for historians, much of the best evidence for identifying the Irish in London is gone. The methods used by contemporaries that were described in the previous chapter have nearly all disappeared. The accents have been silenced, the clothing has disintegrated, and the Irish enclaves have been revitalised into bustling upscale shopping districts. To identify a technique that allows us to classify people from the early nineteenth century as Irish or not, we will have to look beyond the methods used by contemporaries to identify the Irish in their midst. Since this task requires a slightly different approach for each type of primary source, this chapter will focus on textual material. It will propose a method to identify accused *criminals* who were probably Irish, making heavy use of the textual records in the *OBP*, which are accessible via the *Old Bailey Online (OBPO)*. I refer to this method, which relies heavily on surname analysis, as a ‘tool’, which can be found in Appendix I. This tool, in the form of a series of keywords, can be used to identify Irish defendants to supplement traditional historical techniques, and as a proxy for Irishness when no other options are available. This chapter will outline the need for such a tool, and will also justify the adoption of surname analysis as an appropriate option for certain types of research.

The *OBPO* website is a rich resource containing a near-complete run of 200,000 trial accounts from London’s central criminal court over two and a half centuries. For the period between 1801-1820 it is believed that the records are complete, including an account of everyone who was charged with a felonious crime in

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<sup>1</sup> ‘October 1804, trial of Ann Adams, alias Riley’ (t18041024-74), *OBPO*.

London and taken before the jury at the Old Bailey. This makes the website an incredible resource for historians. The original printed collection has not only been digitised, but has also been transcribed through a process known as double-rekeying and converted into machine-readable text, making the records easily searchable and also easy to manipulate with a computer.<sup>2</sup>

The records themselves contain references to hundreds of thousands of individuals. Most of the trial accounts recount the trial of a single accused defendant, while others may refer to a pair or a small group of co-defendants. To make the accounts more useful for researchers, they have been tagged using Extensible Markup Language (XML), which makes it possible to isolate trials that meet certain criteria – for example, only <theft> cases, or only <theft> cases involving <female defendants> who were found <guilty> and <transported to Australia>. This type of classification is much more difficult and costly to undertake if the researcher is forced to use the original paper versions of the source rather than the XML copies which can be processed by a computer.

However, there is no XML tag that identifies the Irish from amongst the 25,000 defendants who faced trial in the Old Bailey during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Most trials do not contain details about the national identity of the accused because it was not usually considered relevant to the trial. The ability to classify each defendant as Irish or not Irish would make it possible to draw comparisons between and across the sources. For example, were the Irish who lived in London more prone to arrest for certain types of crime? This is not the type of question that can be answered with close reading alone; it requires a quantitative approach that treats the records as data rather than as reading material. By doing so it becomes possible to look for patterns and trends across hundreds or thousands of like-sources, which could not be seen by reading any one source, or even all the sources sequentially.

Scale and scalability are additional factors in this challenge. The records of the *OBP* include references to thousands of individuals in tens of thousands of documents. Knowing how to identify the Irish would be one thing, but given the

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<sup>2</sup> Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, 'Old Bailey Online - About This Project', *OBPO*.

size of the archive and the scarcity of time available to spend with each record, a practical approach must also be efficient and scalable. This chapter will not answer historical questions about trends amongst the Irish diaspora (that will be saved for subsequent chapters). Instead it will ask how researchers interested in conducting such studies can identify, with reasonable accuracy and efficiency, the Irish population within a set of historical textual records.

To do this, the chapter compares three methods currently used:

1. Nominal Record Linkage (evidence of an Irish birth in another record)
2. Geographic Keywords (e.g., 'Dublin', 'Connaught', 'Irish')
3. Surname Analysis (has an Irish surname)

The conclusions presented here argue that all three methods used in tandem are the most academically rigorous for identifying the Irish, but surname analysis is an efficient and flexible tool that historians should consider using alongside the more traditional techniques. Surname analysis has many practical limits, as do nominal record linkage and geographic keyword searching. However, as this chapter seeks to make a case for the value of surname analysis as a new tool for historians, it seems pertinent to address some of its limits. For example, for reasons that will be discussed below related to traditional names in Ireland, it is better at identifying the Irish Catholic population than the more recently arrived Protestant community. The approach also cannot be used to distinguish between the recently arrived and long-term residents of the city. Women's tendency to change their surname upon marriage will always leave some element of doubt for that sex – though as I noted in previous chapters, Irish women tended to marry Irish men. As the vast majority of defendants in the *OBP* are male, this proves less of an issue in the subsequent case studies of Irish crime than it would in many other studies. Finally, surname analysis is unable to account for children of mixed marriages (one Irish, one English parent), and will draw its conclusions entirely upon the name of the child's father. Of course, the limits of primary sources mean that all historical techniques, including those considered the most rigorous, such as close reading, leave the historian at the mercy of the

documentary traces, which may not be as faithfully created as we might hope. As with any tool, be that nominal record linkage and close reading, keyword searching, or surname analysis, historians must be aware of the strengths and limits of the approach they use. This chapter will explain the strengths and limits of surname analysis in the context of the other two approaches outlined above.

Of the three approaches, surname analysis provided by far the greatest number of results, and when considering the Irish to include all those of Irish descent, proved useful. The validation exercises conducted in this chapter suggest that surname analysis is appropriate for use in large-scale studies in which a subset of the population is believed to be Irish, and in which a few misclassifications would not undermine the overall results (see Appendix I for the full list of surnames classified as Irish). Validation suggests that it is accurate for material up to at least the early Victorian era and can identify a sample of approximately 40 per cent of the entire Irish population in a set of sources, which is ample for studies of historical demography. By adopting these three approaches for identifying the Irish, and in particular by incorporating surname analysis, researchers can test their hypotheses using many more relevant sources than before, opening up new questions about the Irish diaspora. When presented with only a name, surname analysis can be an excellent indicator of Irishness or a lack thereof.

These results are based upon the study of 278,949 London-area entries from the 1841 *Census of Britain and Wales*, as well as three sets of records from between 1777 and 1820 that contain the names of 42,248 predominantly poor Londoners:

1. 1801 to 1820 *Old Bailey Proceedings (OBP)*: 25,267 defendants
2. 1801 to 1805 *Middlesex Criminal Registers (MCR)*: 5,965 criminals
3. 1777 to 1786 *Middlesex Vagrancy Removal Records*: 11,016 vagrants<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *OBPO*; 'Home Office: Criminal Registers, Middlesex', 1805-1791, HO 26, The National Archives, Kew [hereafter HO 26]. The *Middlesex Criminal Registers* (HO 26) are available electronically through Ancestry.com. The *Middlesex Vagrancy Removal Records* were originally digitised as part of: Henry Adams, Various Vagrancy Removal Records, 1780-1784 *Sessions Papers – Justices' Working*



These records were used to quantify the effectiveness of nominal record linkage, geographic keywords, and surname analysis for identifying the Irish from amidst these 42,248 individuals, and for testing the strength of the correlation between surname and Irishness in the early nineteenth century.

### ***Nominal Record Linkage***

Most studies to date have used only nominal record linkage; a technique which has been revised very little since it was developed on a large scale in the 1960s by demographers and social historians. It generally involves manually piecing together sets of corroborating archival records. Nominal record linkage is popular with historians because it allows the researcher to limit the number of assumptions he or she must make. While intellectually rigorous, it depends upon the existence of relevant and dependable corresponding records pertaining to the same individual.<sup>4</sup>

We do not have readily available birthplace data for the majority of Londoners in the early nineteenth century, which makes nominal record linkage of this kind particularly unreliable. It was not until 1837 in England that the General Register Office began collecting standardised birth, marriage and death details.<sup>5</sup> Pre-1837 historians must rely upon the often-fragmentary parish registers, or a smattering of partial lists that recorded the birthplaces of individuals. The first census to record birthplace was produced in 1841. Thereafter, reliable birthplace details for the entire population appeared only decennially, meaning that anyone who was born and died between census dates, or who moved in and out of the country, is missing from the record.

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*Documents, London Lives, 1690-1800*, [www.londonlives.org](http://www.londonlives.org), version 1.1, 24 April 2012 [hereafter *Vagrancy Records*]. They have been converted into a scholarly dataset as part of the *Vagrant Lives* project: Crymble, Falcini, and Hitchcock, 'Vagrant Lives'.

<sup>4</sup> *Ancestry.com* is currently leading advanced nominal record linkage by providing 'hints' for users, which suggests sources from within their collection that it thinks may pertain to a user's ancestors based on a computer algorithm. This level of sophistication has not yet reached academic historical research.

<sup>5</sup> Records of the General Register Office can be viewed online through *Ancestry.co.uk*. 'England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index: 1837-1915 - *Ancestry.co.uk*', *Ancestry.co.uk*.

In the absence of a complete record, partial lists are useful for piecing together a list of which defendants might be Irish. One example of a relevant partial list is the MCR, which contained the names of everyone indicted for a criminal offense in the county from 1791 to 1805, and for the vast majority of entrants, their place of birth.<sup>6</sup> Similar evidence of birth can be found in the Middlesex Vagrancy Removal records produced in the 1770s and 1780s by Henry Adams, the vagrant contractor for Middlesex County. Adams catalogued the name of each vagrant taken into his charge along with the name of the parish in which the person claimed to have settlement – not quite the same as birthplace, but often not far removed. Unfortunately, both of these lists are relatively small. The surviving entries in the two sets of records only add up to about 24,000 individuals.<sup>7</sup> In a city with a population that surpassed one million, these lists capture at best one per cent – a tiny fragment – of those people who graced the city's streets. We do not know exactly how many people lived in London, since many of them were not permanent, were born, died, or moved away at some point during our period of interest. The stable 'population' of London was certainly much lower than the number of people who spent significant amounts of time there at some point or another. The vagrancy lists are a good example of the temporary nature of many Londoners, meaning a definitive total population, and therefore the exact percentages of all Londoners that these lists represent is impossible to determine.

This lack of readily available birthplace data may be the primary reason for the near absence of studies of the Irish in London before 1841. It would seem that many have been unwilling or unable to tackle the problem of identifying the group without the aid of such demographic sources. They have instead focused their energy on those in the Victorian era when statistics are easier to derive. Even the most basic understanding of the Irish in London pre-1841 is difficult to ascertain; for instance, we do not even know how many Irish there were in London. Admittedly, the problem is not quite as dire as that; we do have some clues about the size of the Irish cohort. In 1814 a group of English

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<sup>6</sup> HO 26.

<sup>7</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 2.

philanthropists counted 14,000 Irish in London; however, their *Report on Mendicity in the Metropolis* (1815) sought to identify only those in need, meaning that the gainfully employed were omitted from the counts and the total population may have been double or more the size of the estimate.<sup>8</sup> The end of the Napoleonic Wars in the year following that report saw an additional influx of decommissioned soldiers and sailors swelling the Irish population further (see chapter 8: Extraordinary Circumstances), though again we have not the numbers to tell in detail, nor do we have the studies by other historians upon which to test these figures.

Instead, we have an abundance of Victorian-era studies of the Irish in Britain and a near dearth in the earlier decades of the century.<sup>9</sup> The 'long eighteenth century' stretches deep into the 1800s in British historiography, and very little of it touches on the Irish in London.<sup>10</sup> On the other end of the temporal scale, Peter Linebaugh has provided some excellent work on the Irish and crime in the mid-eighteenth century, which will be discussed further in the next chapter, but this leaves the early nineteenth-century period with very little published work to date.<sup>11</sup>

There are a few exceptions to this pattern of avoiding the early nineteenth century, such as Craig Bailey's book on the Irish middle class in the metropolis;<sup>12</sup> however, many of these studies have focused on the types of sources that allow the authors to sidestep the challenge of identifying the Irish. Michael de Nie's book, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* includes a section on the end of the eighteenth century, which he built by looking at depictions of the Irish in newspapers.<sup>13</sup> While this work does not focus entirely upon the early nineteenth century, it provides valuable understanding of the era,

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<sup>8</sup> Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 45.

<sup>9</sup> Prominent examples include: Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*; Lees, *Exiles of Erin*; Edward G Lengel, *The Irish Through British Eyes: Perceptions of Ireland in the Famine Era* (London, 2002); *Irish Identities in Victorian Britain*, eds. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Busteed and Hodgson, 'Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life', 139–153; Busteed, *Patterns of Irishness*.

<sup>11</sup> Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*.

<sup>12</sup> Bailey, *Irish London*.

<sup>13</sup> De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*.

while offering comparisons to later periods. Similarly, Roy Douglas and his colleagues have contributed a wonderful work on Anglo-Irish relations through cartoons from 1798-1998, again which includes a discussion of early nineteenth-century Irishness, this time through visual sources.<sup>14</sup>

As the vast majority of historical demographic research about the Irish in Britain relies on nominal record linkage (and in particular seeks evidence that an individual was born in Ireland), in order to make the classification of national identity, a more efficient way to identify the Irish would greatly improve the extent of scholarship in these early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Nominal record linkage does provide that opportunity to increase Irish scholarship, but in a limited way. The *MCR*, for example show that Ann Adams was Irish-born, though the description of her trial does not.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately an Irish birthplace proves problematic for many reasons. Not least because of the ethnically English people who lived in and controlled the political landscape of Ireland – and therefore had Irish birthplaces but their sense of Irishness was complicated. It is also troublesome because, as W. J. Lowe pointed out, it under-represents the Irish population of Britain by roughly half by overlooking the English-born children of Irish immigrants.<sup>17</sup> And finally, like surname analysis, it too may be unable to distinguish between recently arrived and long-term Irish migrants to London except in rare cases with particularly verbose descriptions of the individual. Nominal record linkage tends to work best with people who have unique names, often leaving the Smiths, Browns, and Joneses un-linked.

The best example of a historian tackling the challenge of nominal record linkage in this context is very recent. Peter King's new article in the *Journal of British Studies* on the Irish at the Old Bailey, 1750-1825 is a perfect example of nominal record linkage in practice. In that study, King used the *MCR* to identify Irish-born

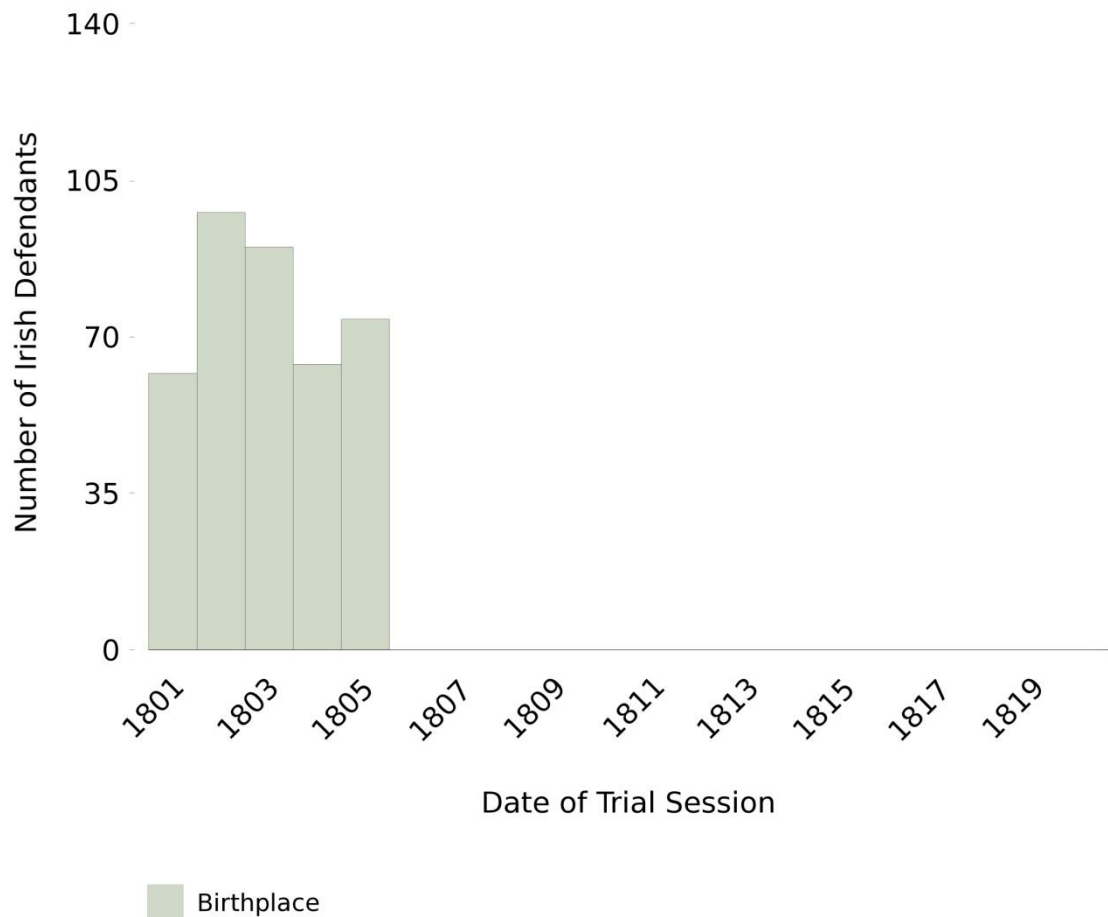
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<sup>14</sup> Douglas, Harte, and O'Hara, *Drawing Conclusions*.

<sup>15</sup> For example, see: Lees, *Exiles of Erin*; J.L. Bolton, 'Irish Migration to England in the Late Middle Ages: The Evidence of 1394 and 1440', *Irish Historical Studies*, 32 (2000), 1-21; Busteed, *Patterns of Irishness*; Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*; King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice'.

<sup>16</sup> HO 26, Middlesex (1804), Piece 10, Page 3.

<sup>17</sup> Lowe, *Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire*, 48.



**Figure 4.1: Defendants identified by birthplace.**

Irish defendants tried at the Old Bailey by year, identified by birthplace using the MCR.

defendants in the OBP, and used this as the basis for his analysis of ethnicity and prejudice in the justice system. King was able to identify 1,188 Irish-born accused between 1791-1805, just over ten per cent of the defendants in the *MCR*. Also within that sample were 539 individuals of unknown birthplace and 4,544 who were born in London – some of whom were presumably the children of Irish-born parents.<sup>18</sup>

King has not chosen his date range at random. The *MCR* do not provide birthplace data before 1791 or after 1805. Neither can he turn to the records of the General Register Office to find more Irish defendants, because, as mentioned, it did not begin collecting standardised birth, marriage and death records until

<sup>18</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 400.

1837. The first census to record birthplace was produced in 1841. That means King is without relevant records outside this fifteen-year window. By relying exclusively on nominal record linkage, he is limited in the types of claims he can make.

The extent of these limits can be demonstrated clearly by looking at defendants found in the *OBP* who faced trial at the Old Bailey between 1801 and 1820. For the first five years of this period, the *MCR* used by King provide details about which defendants were Irish-born and which were not.<sup>19</sup> The distribution of these Irish-born individuals can be seen in Figure 4.1, which shows that useable data was only available for one quarter of the years under inspection in this thesis.

### ***Searching for Geographic Keywords***

In the past decade, digitisation has made it possible to use keywords to search vast online archives to find sources pertaining to the Irish. Words such as the names of principal Irish towns, counties, cities, and 'Irish' or 'Ireland' are obvious choices. However the historiography of keyword searching as applied to historical texts is slight, and what exists is not promising. A study led by F.W. Lancaster showed that basic keyword searching by advanced subject specialists only allowed the user to find about one-third of the really important items in a test database.<sup>20</sup> The results of geographic keyword searching in the present study were not nearly as good.

The most obvious keyword in this case is 'Irish'. Perhaps surprisingly, this is incredibly ineffective because national adjectives appear infrequently in the *OBP*.

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<sup>19</sup> The *MCR* contain 3,858 individuals who also appear in the *OBP*. Of these, 388 (1.5 per cent) are Irish-born out of a total 25,267 defendants across all twenty years.

<sup>20</sup> F.W. Lancaster, C. Elzy, M.J. Zeter, L. Metzler, Y. Low, 'Searching Databases on CD-ROM: Comparison of the Results of End-User Searching with Results from Two Modes of Searching by Skilled Intermediaries', *RQ*, 33 (1994), 370-386. See also J. Stierman, 'Efficient Strategies for Searching Historical Databases', *OAH Magazine of History*, 11 (1997), 45-50; J.G. MaKinster, R.A. Beghetto, J.A. Plucker, 'Why Can't I Find Newton's Third Law? Case Studies of Students' Use of the Web as a Science Resource', *Journal of Education and Technology*, 11 (2002), 155-172; E. Kuiper, M. Volman, J. Terwel, 'The Web as an Information Resource in K-12 Education: Strategies for Supporting Students in Searching and Processing Information', *Review of Educational Research*, 75 (2005), 285-328.

Less than seven per cent of trials in the *OBP* contain any national adjectives; this method fails because the nationality of a defendant was rarely relevant to the trial, and the records were not created with the needs of researchers in mind.<sup>21</sup> An adjective denoting national identity, like 'Irish', used in the correct context, is a strong indicator that a particular person may be Irish. However, it is almost certainly a more useful keyword in a newspaper database looking for articles about the Irish than it is for identifying Irish individuals. Even when 'Irish' does appear in the *OBP* it rarely actually refers to an Irish person.<sup>22</sup> In a long-eighteenth-century criminal framework, the word often refers to Irish linen, which was produced in Ireland and heavily imported into England.<sup>23</sup> As a portable and relatively nondescript item that could be sold onwards, it was frequently the target of theft and therefore the term 'Irish' finds its way into the criminal trial accounts, when the judge read out the charges against the defendant. 'Irish' identified only 56 out of 25,267 defendants as Irish – 8 of whom had already been identified using nominal record linkage and birthplace data.

Other geographic keywords are potentially useful. Dublin Poll is the alias of Mary Ann Caffray, who was convicted in 1816 for pick pocketing.<sup>24</sup> The keyword 'Dublin' in Caffray's alias puts forth a strong case for her Irishness, even without direct birthplace evidence or any mention of the keyword 'Irish'. However, as with Irish cloth, Irish place names can lead to ambiguity when used as keywords. 'Down', an Irish county, has obvious problems when used as a keyword, though typically it is referred to as 'county Down'. 'Cork' is both a city and county in the south of Ireland and a type of tree used in a range of products. Just to the north of

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<sup>21</sup> The adjectives searched for in the *OBP* and the subsequent number of matches are: French (2,988), English (2,760), Irish (1,438), German (1,104), British (872), American (608), Scotch (584), Spanish (550), Welsh (519), Dutch (499), Italian (492), Indian (308), Russian (275), Scot (234), African (132), Portuguese (129), Prussian (122), Australian (121), Belgian (100), Turkish (94), Austrian (81), Swedish (78), Chinese (75), Scottish (55), Canadian (51), Japanese (42), Danish (41), Norwegian (36), Hungarian (24), Flemish (19), Finnish (2), Total: 14,433 matches out of a possible 197,745 criminal trials.

<sup>22</sup> In the twenty years between 1801 and 1820, *Irish* appears just 187 times in the *OBP*, 118 of which are national adjectives describing a person – though not necessarily describing the defendant.

<sup>23</sup> See Anne McKernan, 'War, Gender, and Industrial Innovation: Recruiting Women Weavers in Early Nineteenth Century Ireland', *Journal of Social History*, 28 (1994), 109-124.

<sup>24</sup> 'September 1816, trial of Mary Ann Caffray (t18160918-82)', *OBPO*.

Cork, 'Limerick', is both a city and a county in Ireland, but is also a well-known form of poetry and a not infrequent surname.

One might expect these ambiguities to feature rarely in London criminal trials, but this is not the case. 'Cork' returned a total of fourteen true hits (entries that refer to the Irish place name), but four times as many references to corkscrews, wine bottle corks, sheets of cork, and cork cutters.<sup>25</sup> Even Westminster's 'Cork Street' appears in the record in an 1805 trial.<sup>26</sup> Though no references to poetic limericks appear, the term finds true hits only 4 times amidst 26 matches.<sup>27</sup> The results by adding the remaining Irish counties, principal towns and cities, and 'Ireland' itself are not much more fruitful. Excluding "King's" and "Queen's" counties because of the overwhelming tendency of those words to return false positives, the thirty-seven keywords identified only 225 trials that used the word in a context related to Ireland.<sup>28</sup>

Of those 225 trials, less than half (only 98) provided details that could be used to classify the defendant as Irish. Another 29 entries probably refer to an Irish defendant, but the trial account was ambiguous enough to leave room for plausible doubt. The remaining entries generally referred to Irish victims, Irish witnesses, people who had briefly landed in Ireland while serving in the navy or merchant marine, or people who happened to mention Ireland or a place therein while giving their testimony. These keywords, even after they have been examined to include only references to Ireland, are still less than 50 per cent effective at identifying trials containing Irish defendants (Figure 4.2).

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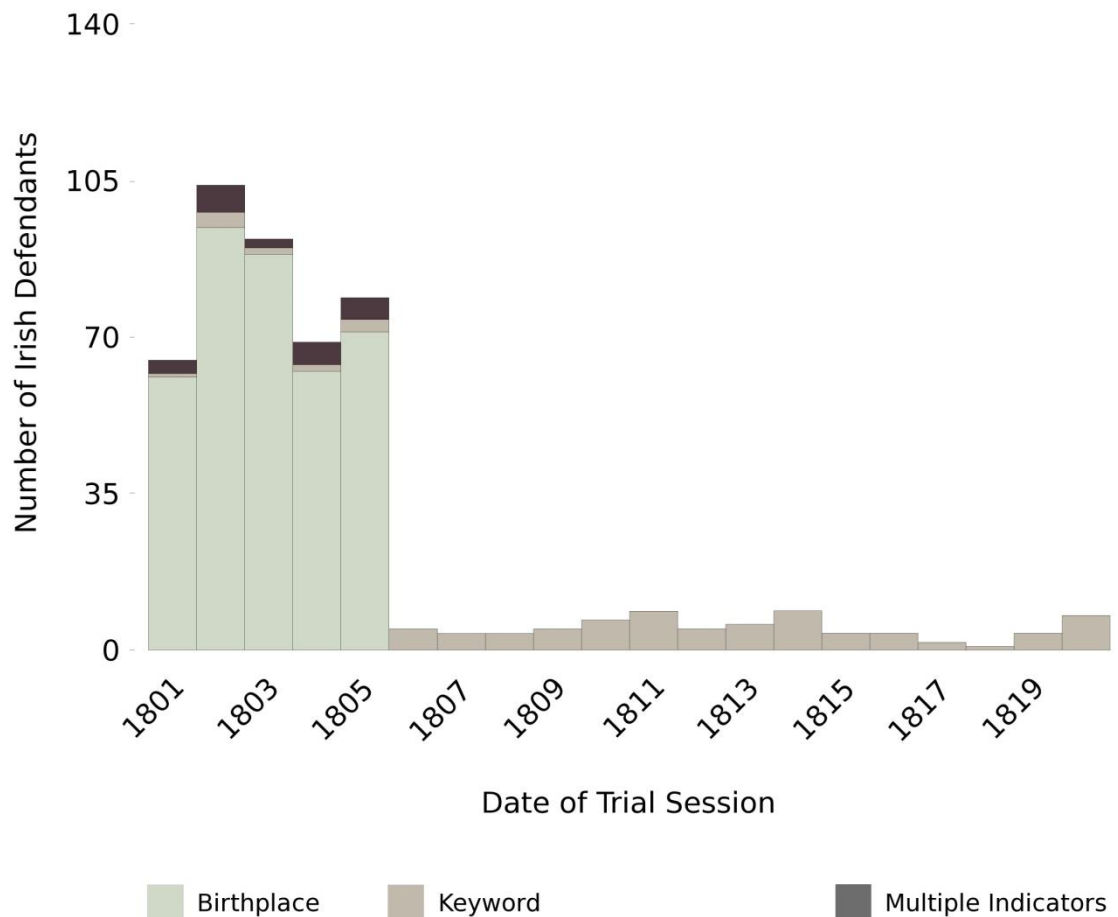
<sup>25</sup> Searched for all offences where the transcription matches 'cork', between 1801 and 1820, *OBPO*.

<sup>26</sup> 'April 1805, trial of Elizabeth Otway (t18050424-125)', *OBPO*.

<sup>27</sup> 'Searched for all offences where the transcription matches 'limerick', between 1801 and 1820', *OBPO*.

<sup>28</sup> The following keywords related to Irish place names were searched in the *OBPO*: Irish, Ireland, Dublin, Belfast, Waterford, Antrim, Armagh, Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, 'County Down', Donegal, Fermanagh, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Limerick, Londonderry, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Tyrone, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow, Ulster, Munster, Connacht, Leinster.





**Figure 4.2: Defendants identified by birthplace and geographic keywords.**

Irish defendants tried at the Old Bailey by year, identified by birthplace and thirty-seven geographic keywords, using the MCR and OBOP.

This work requires individual interpretations in each instance, making the process incredibly laborious. These 225 trials took several days of full-time research to unpick, which would not be practical across thousands of potential matches. Despite the investment of time, these keywords were only able to classify 98 defendants as Irish out of a total of 25,267. If combined with the defendants already classified as Irish (minus duplicates), there are now 480 Irish defendants, or 1.9 per cent of all defendants, which are still primarily clustered in the years 1801-1805.

### ***Surname Analysis***

The third technique, surname analysis, has long roots amongst onomasticians. A group of epidemiologists led by Bridget Huey-Huey Hage touted surname

analysis as an effective way to identify an ethnic subset of the population.<sup>29</sup> However, their work was based on much older ideas. In a historical context most discussions of surname analysis have occurred in America. It was used by the *American Historical Association* in the 1930s to calculate the ethnic makeup of the United States at the time of the American Revolution, and has been used in several studies to identify the American-Hispanic population.<sup>30</sup> By the 1980s that original report from the American Historical Association from five decades earlier sparked a heated exchange in the pages of *William and Mary Quarterly*.<sup>31</sup> The original authors, Barker and Hansen, were accused of using inappropriate data with which to conduct their analysis. Some suggestions were made for improving the results and the methodology; however, no one took up the challenge, and surname analysis has since seen little development amongst academic historians, with the exception of work by Malcolm Smith and Donald MacRaild who continue to use it for identifying the likely county of origin of known Irish individuals.<sup>32</sup>

While the vast majority of trial accounts do not contain national adjectives, every single defendant has a known name, suggesting a surname analysis may be productive in this instance. In cases such as that of John Driscoll, a defendant convicted of uttering false bank notes in 1818, a name is virtually all that could

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<sup>29</sup> Bridge Huey-Huey Hage, R. Graeme Oliver, John W. Powles, Mark L. Wahlqvist, 'Telephone Directory Listings of Presumptive Chinese Surnames: An Appropriate Sampling Frame for a Dispersed Population with Characteristic Surnames', *Epidemiology*, 1 (1990), 405-408. See a rebuttal and reply from: B.C.K. Choi, A.J.G. Hanley, E.J. Holowaty, D. Dale, 'Letters to the Editor', *Epidemiology*, 4 (1993), 86; B. Huey-Huey Hsu-Hage, M.L. Wahlqvist, 'Letters to the Editor', *Epidemiology*, 4 (1993), 87.

<sup>30</sup> See: H.F. Barker and M.L. Hansen, 'Report of the Committee on Linguistic and National Stocks in the Population of the United States', *Annual Report for the Year 1931*, 1 (Washington, 1932); William W. Willie Jr., 'The Spanish Surname Criterion for Identifying Hispanos in the Southwestern United States: A Preliminary Evaluation', *Social Forces*, 38 (1960), 363-366; Robert W. Buechley, 'A Reproducible Method of Counting Persons of Spanish Surname', *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 56 (1961), 88-97; Maria Matute-Bianchi, 'Ethnic Identities and Patterns of Social Success and Failure among Mexican-Descent and Japanese-American Students in a California High School: An Ethnographic Analysis', *American Journal of Education*, 95 (1986), 233-255.

<sup>31</sup> See Forrest McDonald and Ellen Shapiro McDonald, 'The Ethnic Origins of the American People, 1790', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 37 (1980), 179-199; Donald H. Akenson, 'Why the Accepted Estimates of Ethnicity of the American People, 1790, Are Unacceptable', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 41 (1984), 102-119; Thomas L. Purvis, 'Why the Accepted Estimates of Ethnicity of the American People, 1790, Are Unacceptable: Commentary', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 41 (1984), 119-135.

<sup>32</sup> Smith and MacRaild, 'The Origins of the Irish in Northern England', 24-49.

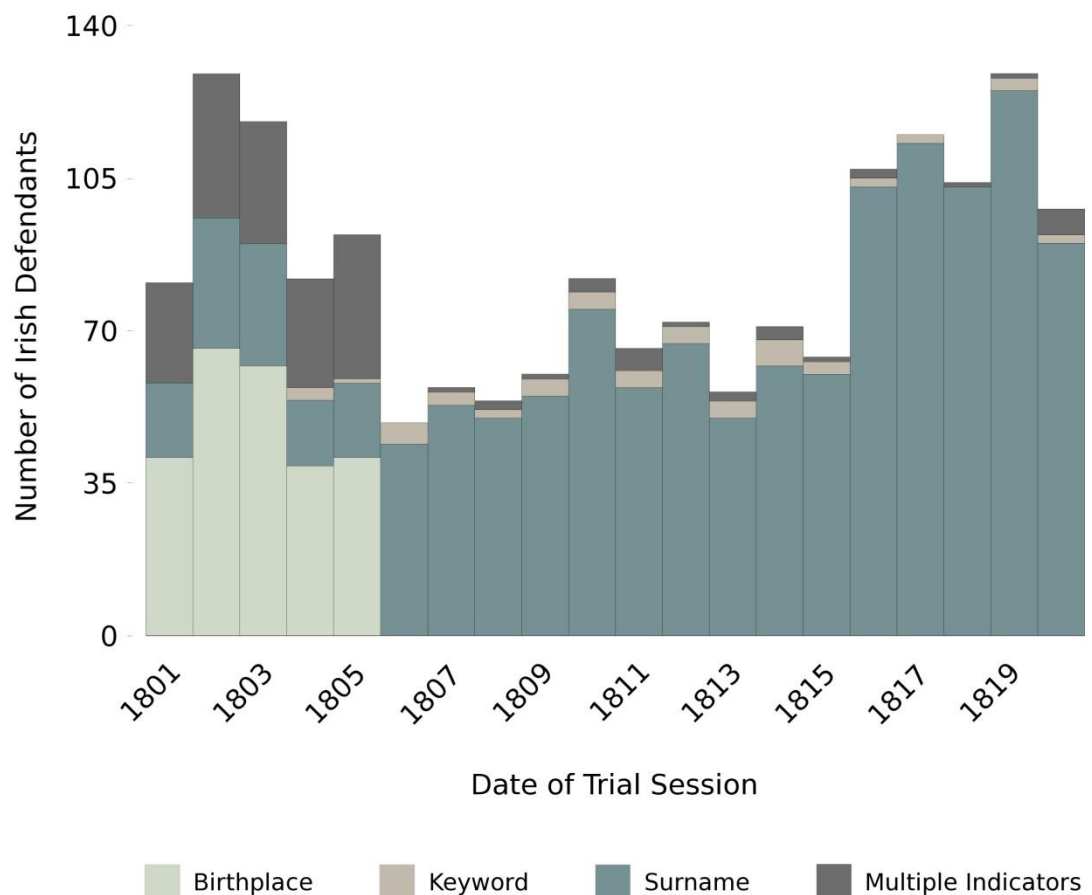
point to the defendant's Irishness or lack thereof.<sup>33</sup> A reliable solution that focuses on surnames makes it possible to simplify the problem from one in which a historian must decide if John Driscoll is Irish, into an easier problem: is someone named Driscoll *likely* to be Irish? By classifying surnames known to appear in the London area as either Irish or not Irish, it becomes possible to drastically increase the number of probable Irish defendants to the levels seen in Figure 4.3.

Criticisms about the accuracy and reliability of surname analysis are important to acknowledge; however, this author believes the works of William Willie (1960), Robert Buechley (1961), Maria Eugenia Matute-Bianchi (1986), Bridget Huey-Huey Hage (1990), and especially Donald MacRaild and Malcolm Smith (2011), show that surnames can and should be used to identify a subset of the population when no other alternative is practical and an appropriate set of data can be acquired to determine relevant names to use.

Compared to keyword searching (98 Irish defendants) and nominal record linkage (388 Irish defendants), surname analysis (1,242 Irish defendants) identified a much larger set of probable Irish individuals than the other two approaches, bringing the number of probable Irish defendants to 6.7 per cent of the entire defendant population. Contemporary wisdom and historical evidence suggest a little more than a tenth of criminals in London during this period were Irish. That means these combined approaches missed some entries, and the nature of these particular sources means that a higher proportion of defendants were probably identified between 1801 and 1805 than in later years. Nevertheless the number of records in those years post 1805 is now at the level where it would be possible for Peter King's study of ethnicity and prejudice in the justice system, for example, to be re-analysed using a far larger proportion of relevant records than through nominal record linkage alone. Using surname analysis, this author is confident that John Driscoll, mentioned at the opening of this section, was probably Irish. The remainder of this section will explain how researchers can be confident in that conclusion.

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<sup>33</sup> 'September 1818, trial of John Driscoll (t18180909-48)', *OBPO*.



**Figure 4.3: Defendants identified by birthplace, geographic keywords, and surname.**

Irish defendants tried at the Old Bailey by year, identified by birthplace, thirty-seven geographic keywords, and surname analysis, using the MCR, OBOP, and the 1841 census.

One of the biggest criticisms of surname analysis comes from Forest McDonald and Ellen Shapiro McDonald, who complained that Barker and Hansen’s 1931 study of ethnicity in eighteenth-century America had associated inappropriate names with specific ethnicities. In particular, the pair argued that the names used to represent the English were in fact overwhelmingly Welsh. They also noted that the names used to identify the Irish were based on Robert Edwin Matheson’s study from 1894, using data from 1881, nearly a century later than Barker and Hansen’s 1790 study date, and were therefore of questionable reliability.<sup>34</sup> This complaint highlights the importance of using an appropriate list of names for identifying the Irish. Matheson’s *Special Report on the Surnames in*

<sup>34</sup> McDonald and McDonald, ‘The Ethnic Origins of the American People’, 184, 191.

*Ireland* (1894), Patrick Woulfe's *Irish Names and Surnames* (1922) or Edward MacLysaght's *The Surnames of Ireland* (1969) includes thousands of Irish surnames, and are seemingly obvious places to turn for a list of names.<sup>35</sup> However, to avoid the criticisms of scholars such as the McDonalds, it is important to acknowledge that Matheson, Woulfe, and MacLysaght's works were not necessarily created for the purposes of identifying the Irish in early nineteenth-century sources. Both Matheson and MacLysaght's lists included the name Smith, which is of course English, perhaps quintessentially the most English name there is. Lists of Irish names often include Smith because the name was the fifth most prevalent surname in Ireland – representing an Anglicised form of MacGowan, or son of the smith.<sup>36</sup> Matheson's top 100 Irish surnames include a number of problematic names besides Smith, such as Wilson, Clarke, Brown, Martin, White, and Robinson, all of which are common British names and obviously problematic if trying to identify the Irish in London. Any list of names used to identify the Irish in London in the early nineteenth century therefore must be bespoke, based on the realities of that place and time.

The 1841 census of England and Wales offers a solution. Like modern censuses, everyone living in England or Wales on a single night in June 1841 was recorded along with, for the first time, the person's place of birth. These records make it possible to tell who was born in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, Foreign Parts, or the local area. While 1841 is two decades after the end of the present study period (1801-1820), this chapter will show that the distance in time does not impact the census' usefulness for determining if a surname can accurately predict the Irish-born in the preceding decades.

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<sup>35</sup> R.E. Matheson, 'Special Report on Surnames in Ireland with Notes as to Numerical Strength, Derivation, Ethnology, and Distribution', *Twenty-Ninth Detailed Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Marriages, Births, and Deaths in Ireland*. (Dublin, 1894); P. Woulfe, *Irish Names and Surnames* (Dublin, 1922); E. MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland* (1969).

<sup>36</sup> See Matheson, 'Special Report on Surnames in Ireland', 9; H.C. Lawlor, 'The Origins of Some Common Surnames (Concluded)', *The Irish Naturalists' Journal*, 1, (1925), 35-36.

Using all 278,949 records of adult males in the hundred of Ossulstone (Figure 4.4) from the 1841 census, each unique surname was analysed.<sup>37</sup> The hundred is a former administrative district in Middlesex County that was home to approximately one million people by the mid-nineteenth century. It excluded Westminster, the City of London proper, as well as Southwark, immediately south of the river opposite the city. Nevertheless, it included large parts of the metropolis' newly developing urban areas such as St. Marylebone, St. Pancras, St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and the Docklands, as well as fairly vast swaths of countryside and rural villages within striking distance of the capital. The combined urban and rural nature of the hundred makes it particularly useful for the present study, by capturing a wider variety of people than could be found in purely urban parishes, but without going beyond the practical everyday reach of the metropolis.

These more than a quarter-million records were sorted by surname, revealing 58,964 unique surnames: each a potential tool for identifying the Irish in London. The vast majority (89 per cent) of names have no Irish connection at all, while 5 per cent have *only* Irish-born members.<sup>38</sup> There is clearly a core of names that may be useful as a means for identifying the Irish.

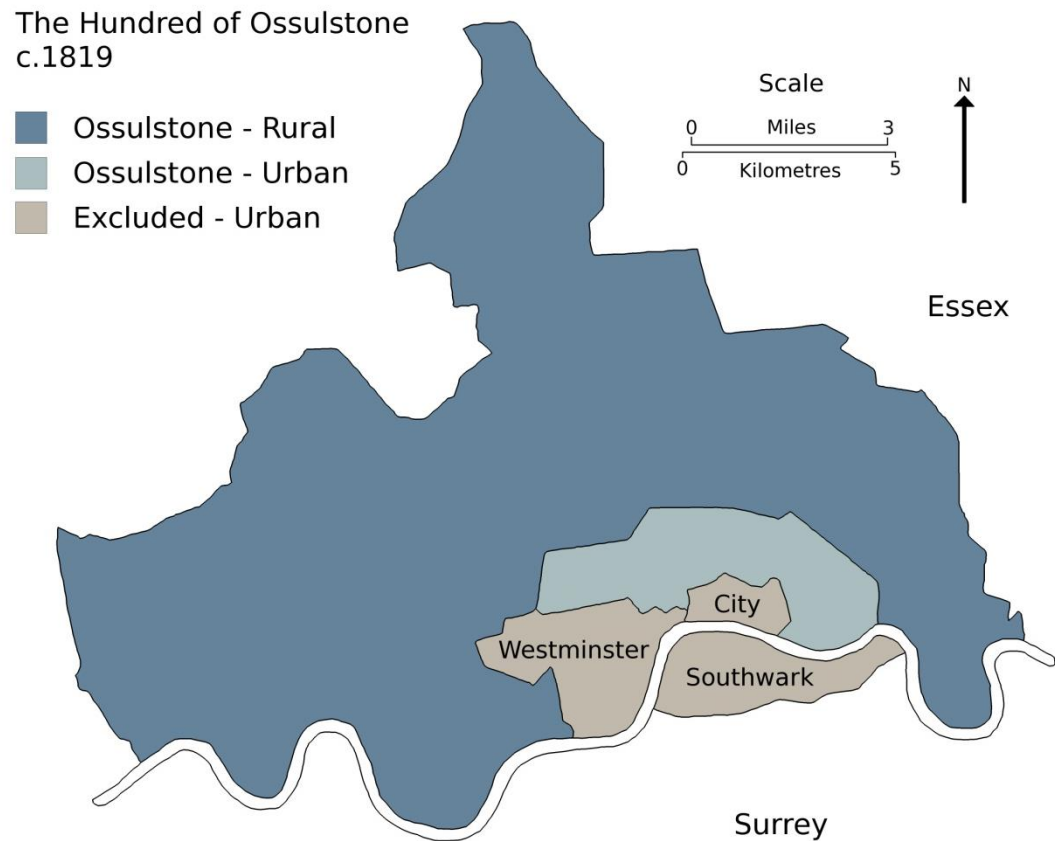
To determine the best names, each name was then given an 'Irishness' score based on the following formula to calculate the percentage of adult males with that name born in Ireland:

$$\text{Irishness} = \text{Irish-Born Adult Males} / \text{Total Adult Males} * 100$$

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<sup>37</sup> An adult male was defined as a male of at least 20 of age. Children were omitted from the analysis because even the most Irish of names was deemed 'English' due to the high numbers of London-born children with Irish parents. Women were omitted from the sample dataset to avoid undue attention to the challenge of maiden names, though evidence from Busteed and Hodgson, 'Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life, 148, suggests Irish women in Britain tended to marry Irish men well into the middle of the nineteenth century.

<sup>38</sup> 3,026 of the 58,964 names in the sample have *only* Irish-born members. 6,632 names have at least one Irish-born member.

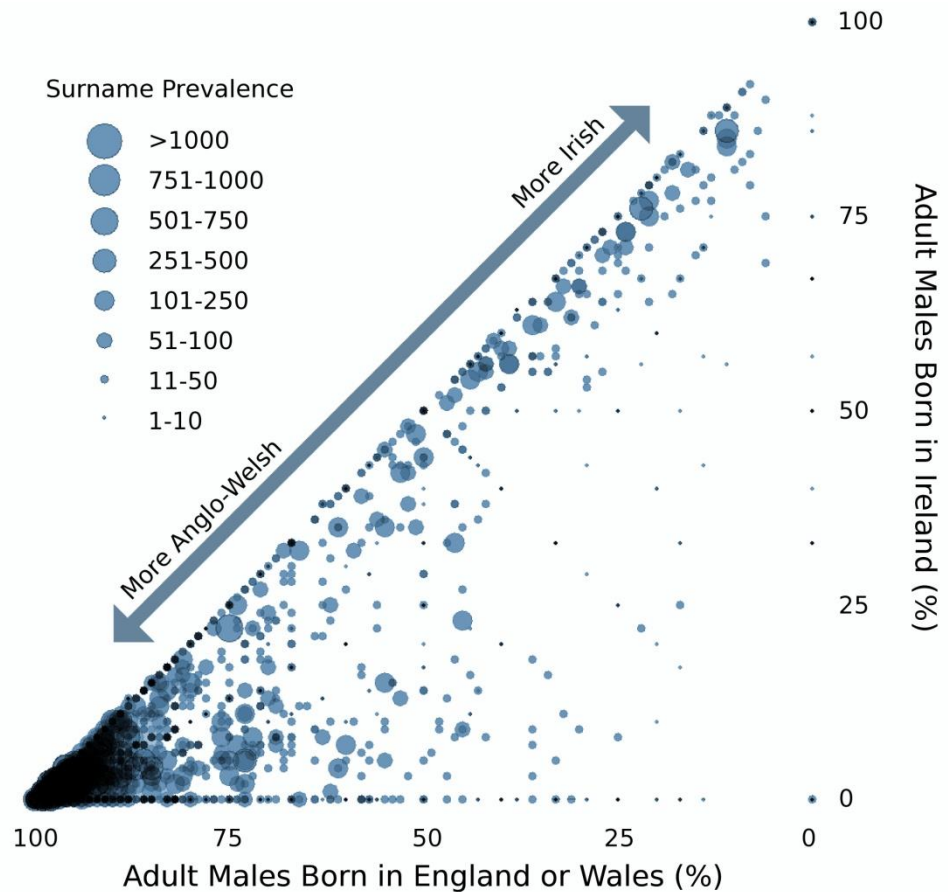


**Figure 4.4: The Hundred of Ossulstone.**

Map of the Hundred of Ossulstone circa 1819, showing urban and rural regions as well as the metropolis.

Names were also given an 'English/Welsh' score using the same methods. Figure 4.5 shows that there are a small subset of surnames that have strong connections to the Irish in London, and which therefore could be used to classify defendants as probably Irish or probably not.

Figure 4.5 shows each surname that appeared in the census represented as a circle – the more common the surname the larger the circle. The names were plotted using the formulae described above. The further to the right a circle appears the less English or Welsh it is. The further up the y-axis a circle appears the more Irish it is. Most names have no Irish connection at all, or at best a very weak connection, seen in Figure 4.5 as a dark cluster in the bottom left corner. Without evidence to suggest otherwise, defendants with these very English and



**Figure 4.5: Surnames of the Hundred of Ossulstone.**

The 58,964 unique surnames found in the Hundred of Ossulstone in the 1841 census, with each name plotted as a percentage of adult males born in England/Wales versus born in Ireland.<sup>39</sup>

Welsh names are probably not Irish, while those that show strong Irish connections are the most likely matches. Amongst this set of common Irish names are Murphy, Sullivan, McCarty, Mahoney, Donovan, and Driscoll, which allows us to conclude that John Driscoll mentioned above was likely Irish despite an absence of any direct evidence in the description of his trial.

6,632 names have at least one Irish-born member, and 3,026 names contain only Irish-born members. The question now becomes, which names are Irish enough? Should the list of reliable names be limited to those with scores greater than 80 per cent? 50 per cent? 10 per cent? To determine how Irish a name should be before it can be used reliably to identify the Irish, the results of the initial census

<sup>39</sup> Derived from '1841 UK Census', 6 June 1841, *Ancestry.co.uk* (Accessed 2010-2011).



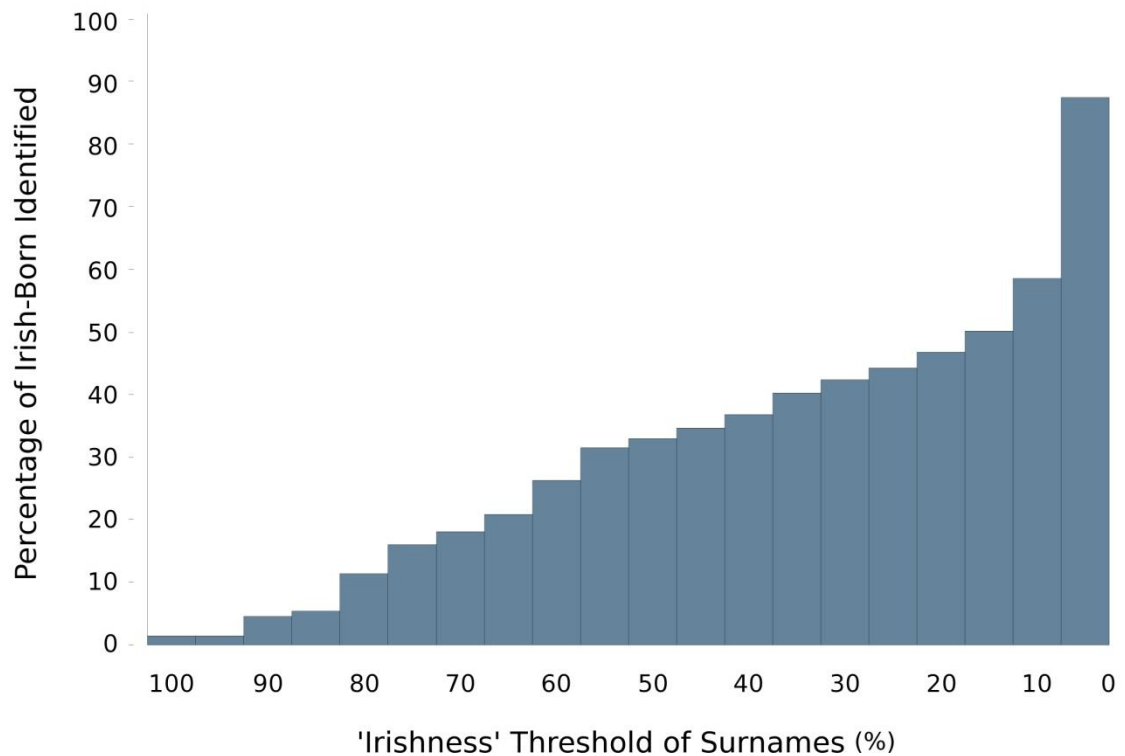
analysis were compared against the entries in the *MCR* from 1801 to 1805. These records included a known subset of 572 Irish individuals that could be used to determine the threshold for the Irishness score that accurately identified the largest proportion of the Irish, and the point at which adding more names became counter-productive.<sup>40</sup>

Surnames were grouped by their Irishness score starting with scores greater than 95 per cent, adding the surnames with scores of 5 per cent less for each subsequent test. The first group contains only names with an Irishness score of 95 or greater; the second group contains names with a score of 90 or greater, and so on, until all names from the 1841 census sample are included. Each of these cohorts was then tested against the *MCR* to see what proportion of Irish-born defendants each captured (see Figure 4.6). This means Murphy, for example, which has an Irishness score of 75.8 will be added in the fifth test, at which point it becomes possible to see how many more entries Murphy and the names with similar Irishness scores impacted the number of Irish-born defendants identified.

Figure 4.6 makes it clear that the names with incredibly high Irishness scores (left-hand columns) will identify very small numbers of Irish-born defendants. At the other extreme, every single surname in the 1841 census sample captures slightly fewer than ninety per cent of the Irish-born from the *MCR*, meaning that, eleven per cent are still missed. Surnames are incredibly diverse, and one-off spellings make it impractical to get complete accuracy using an onomastic approach. Nevertheless, this graph shows that it is possible to capture a reasonably large proportion of the Irish defendants – probably somewhere between ten and fifty per cent – using these surnames alone. While not perfect, that is a considerable step forward from the results seen above using keywords and nominal record linkage.

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<sup>40</sup> HO 26.



**Figure 4.6: Efficacy of surname analysis.**

The percentage of Irish-born defendants identified using Irish surname lists with decreasing 'Irishness scores'.

Unfortunately it is not particularly clear from Figure 4.6 what the best lower confidence threshold for the list should be. An Irishness score of 5 per cent would capture 60 per cent of the Irish-born population; this would be wonderful, but such a low score would increase the number of false positives. The challenge then, is to capture as many Irish-born individuals as possible, while ensuring that any gains in the Irish-born group are not offset by false positives.

When applied to a set of records, the surnames on the final list can have one of four results:

1. good results
2. neutral results
3. poor results
4. missed results

A good result is a surname that is able to accurately identify an Irish-born individual. If the *MCR* confirm that Charles O'Connor, who was accused of sheep stealing in 1802, was born in Ireland and the list of surnames includes *O'Connor*, then this is a good result.<sup>41</sup>

A neutral result is someone born in the London area, since the Irishness or at least partial Irishness of these individuals, who most likely have Irish relatives, cannot be discounted. Anyone identified using the surnames list that was born in London, Middlesex, or Surrey, is more likely than a random individual to be a member of the culturally Irish communities in London and thus was considered a neutral result. This means that if the surname Murphy was on the list and it identified 18 year-old John Murphy who was born in Middlesex County, this would not be a concern, nor would it count as a victory for the purposes of validating the effectiveness of this tool for finding the best possible set of results, and given the complexity of Irish identity.<sup>42</sup>

A poor result is one that identifies a person incorrectly or probably incorrectly as Irish. Any individual identified using the surnames list that was not born in Ireland or the London area was classified as a poor result. The same surname Murphy would also identify Norfolk-born Rebecca Murphy.<sup>43</sup> Based on her place of birth and what is known about Irish immigrants, it is quite probable that Rebecca's maiden name sounds English rather than Irish. She may have married an Irish man, and though it is entirely possible that Rebecca lived a very Irish life in London, for the sake of prudence while determining the accuracy of names on the list, she was deemed mis-classified.

People of African descent add another twist to the problem and are another opportunity for poor results. Charles Donovan, a black man born in Africa was convicted of stealing handkerchiefs in 1805 and was transported for seven years. Though *Donovan* is an extremely Irish name, in this case it is most likely a slave

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<sup>41</sup> HO 26, Middlesex (1801-1805), Piece 8, Page 99.

<sup>42</sup> HO 26, Middlesex (1801-1805), Piece 8, Page 90.

<sup>43</sup> HO 26, Middlesex (1801-1805), Piece 8, Page 80.

name.<sup>44</sup> London had a large black community in the eighteenth century, many of whom were shipped to the Sierra Leone colony in 1787; although some did remain in London, few if any had uniquely African surnames.<sup>45</sup> It is entries like this that one might hope to avoid counting amongst the subset of the Irish in London, though to use surname analysis one does have to accept a degree of uncertainty.

Missed results in this case are known Irish-born individuals that were not identified as Irish with a surname analysis. These missed results will be discussed in the next section.

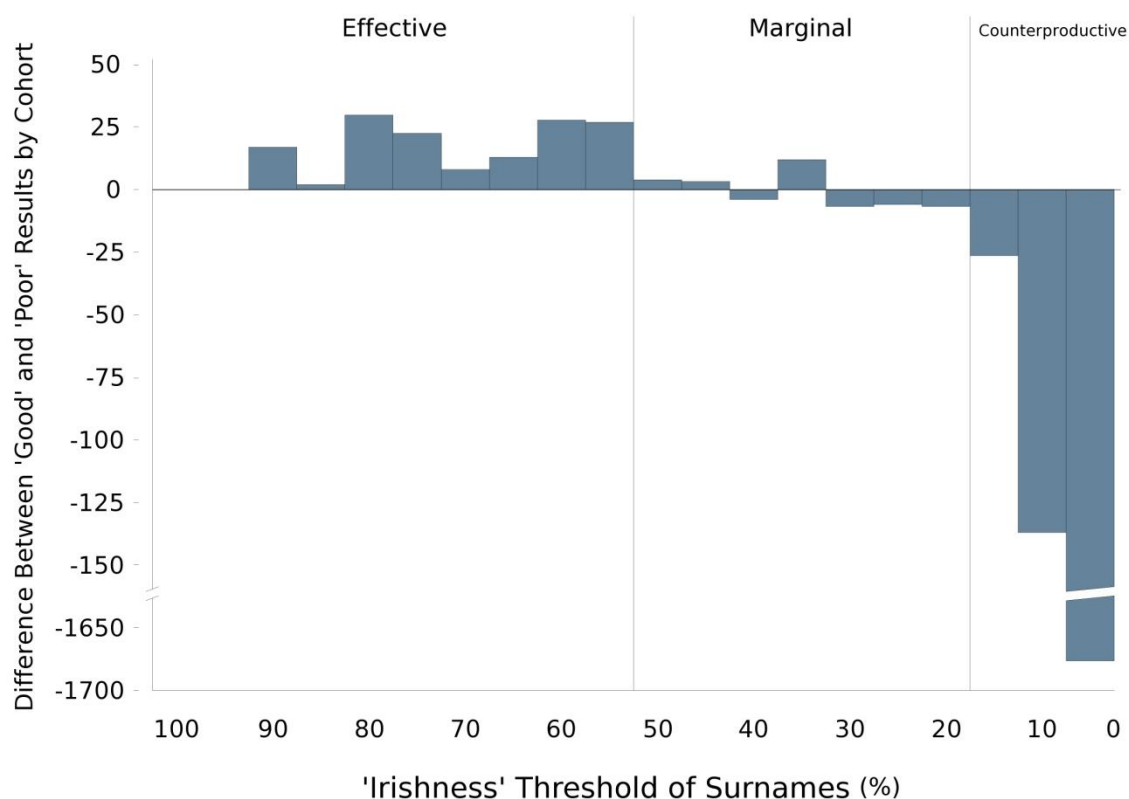
To get the best set of surnames one must find the subset that identifies the greatest number of good results while minimising poor results. This was determined using the individuals in the *MCR*, by testing each of the Irish surname cohorts described above to find the point at which adding more names starts generating more poor results than good (see Figure 4.7). Entries above the zero line show more ‘good’ results than ‘poor’, and the reverse is true below the line. This means that for every bar above the line, adding the additional surnames in that cohort was productive. With this in mind, Figure 4.7 shows clear positive results down to an Irishness score of 50. Between 50 and 35, the results hover around the zero mark, being neither good nor bad. At the 35-30 range there is a slight improvement again – a product of names that are one-third Irish that for some reason prove better than not – before falling off dramatically. While names with an Irishness score of 5 or greater would accurately identify 60 per cent of the Irish-born defendants as seen in Figure 4.6, using such a low cutoff threshold would introduce far more false positives than would be desirable (see the second last column of Figure 4.7).

The ‘best’ Irishness score threshold to use as a lower limit is subjective, as a case could be made for either 50 or 30. To err on the side of caution, this study decided to use 50 as the threshold of ‘Irish enough’. At this cutoff, 4,094 uniquely

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<sup>44</sup> ‘October 1805, trial of Charles Donavan (t18051030-42)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>45</sup> See Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, chapter 5, p. 30.

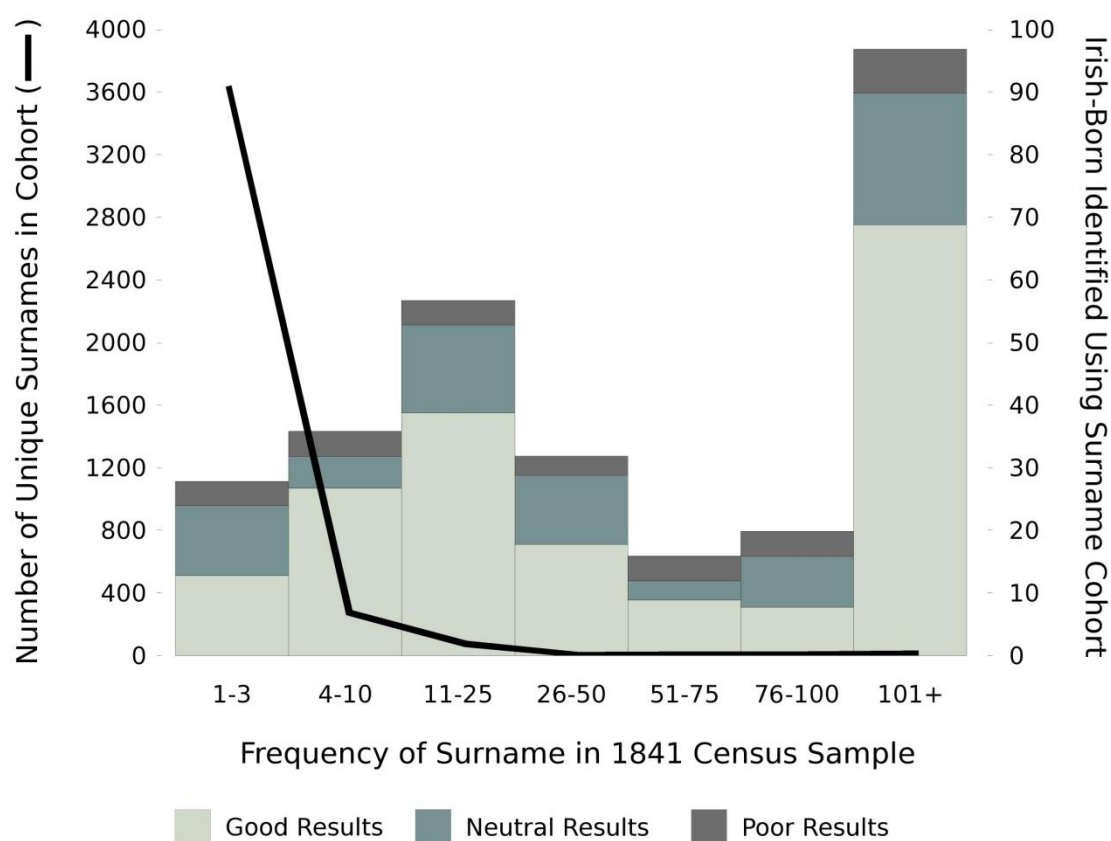


**Figure 4.7: Identifying the threshold of effective surnames.**

The difference between 'good' results and 'poor' results for each surname listed in five percentage point cohorts, compared against known birthplace data from the MCR.

spelled surnames were incorporated into the Irish surnames list. This made it possible to identify 1,686 *probable* Irish defendants in the *OBP* out of 25,267 defendants (6.6 per cent of all defendants), as seen in Figure 4.3 above.

Since the classification of so many of these names was based on just a few entries pertaining to rare names, there is room to refine the list. For example, *Zagorski* has an Irishness score of 100, as do *Moncko*, *Tinling*, and *Wimphey*. In fact, there are 2,556 Irish surnames (62 per cent) that appear only once in the 1841 census. This is in sharp contrast with names such as Murphy that appears 348 times in the census, and in which one can be much more confident. These 2,556 one-off names are also incredibly ineffective, identifying only three Irish-born individuals in the *MCR*. This is less effective at identifying Irish defendants than was the single keyword 'Limerick', which was able to point to four individuals. As can be seen in Figure 4.8, these uncommon names do not pull their weight.



**Figure 4.8: Efficacy of common versus uncommon names.**

The rate at which common versus uncommon names are able to produce Good, Neutral and Poor results as defined above, when used to identify Irish-born individuals in the MCR from 1801-1820, excluding entries for which birthplace is unknown or illegible.

To generate Figure 4.8, surnames were split into one of seven groups depending on how frequently the name appeared in the 1841 census. The bars show how many Irish-born individuals were identified using each group of surnames, splitting the results into good, neutral, and poor as above. These bars show that the most effective names are those that appeared at least 101 times in the census. The black line on the graph shows the number of surnames in each group, which makes it clear that a very large number of uncommon names (the left column) are almost useless, while a handful of very common names (the right column) are tremendously effective.

By eliminating all names from the list that appear fewer than four times in the census, only 13 good matches from the set of known Irish-born defendants are lost, while reducing the number of surnames from 4,094 to 457. This is worthwhile because entries with the lowest confidence from the list of surnames can be removed without dramatically reducing the number of Irish people the list can identify. With this more reliable reduced list of 457 surnames, it is possible to accurately identify 30 per cent of the Irish-born defendants in the *MCR* (down from 32 per cent), using a surname analysis from the 1841 census. This in itself is not particularly helpful, since the *Criminal Registers* tell the reader which individuals from within its own pages are Irish-born; yet, this 30 per cent is a useful measure of how effective one might expect the surname analysis to be when seeking to identify the Irish in cases where no corroborating records are available.

The remaining 457 names can be further refined to adjust for phonetic variations of a single name: *Sullivan*, *Sulevan*, *Sulivan*, *Sulivon*, and *O'Sullivan*, for example all appear as unique names on the list. The Soundex algorithm, patented by Robert C. Russell in 1918, is an effective way to further refine the list.<sup>46</sup> The algorithm is not perfect and will incorrectly classify both 'McCaffrey' and 'McIvor' as homonyms; however, despite these occasional failings, using Soundex with some close reading can refine the original list of 457 names down to 283 Irish root surnames and their variations.

The criticisms of the McDonalds, as they relate to the distance in time between the data collection (1841) and the study period (1801-1820) remain. Can a surname analysis based upon London in 1841 be used to identify the Irish decades earlier? With high mortality rates and low life expectancy, most of the

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<sup>46</sup> R.C. Russell, US Patent 1,261,167, (April 2, 1918). The basic premise of a Soundex code is that vowels are unimportant, and consonants make one of six distinct sounds in the English language. All Soundex codes are four characters long, beginning with the first letter of the word, followed by three digits that represent the next three consonant sounds. Consonants that tend to make similar sounds in English are clustered together under a single corresponding digit. For example: m and n are both represented by the number 5. Sullivan has the Soundex code S415. To convert this back into the letters represented by the code it would read: Slvn. All of Sullivan's derivative spellings share the same code, S415 (except O'Sullivan, which we know comes from the same root), meaning any names with the same code can be checked to see if they are homonyms.

people who appeared in the *OBP* between 1801 and 1820 had died or moved elsewhere before the census was taken. The Middlesex vagrancy removal records provide a means of validating the efficacy of the list of surnames. These records were created six decades before the census, between 1777 and 1786. They include the names and places of settlement of 11,016 vagrants or vagrant families ejected from Middlesex during that period.<sup>47</sup> Of these records 2,559 (23 per cent) claimed they were from Ireland. These vagrancy removal records generally included the same classes of character that were typically found on trial at the Old Bailey – namely the poor and labouring classes. If the surnames identified above as Irish are able to reliably identify Irish vagrants from sixty years earlier, then one can be confident in the connection between Irishness and surnames throughout the long eighteenth century.

Even though the sample size is much smaller – c.11,000 versus c.250,000 – the surnames on the list were able to identify one quarter of the Irish-born with 83 per cent accuracy.<sup>48</sup> Recall that the same list was able to identify 30 per cent of the Irish-born entries in the *Middlesex Criminal Records*, so the results are encouraging. Not all names had the same or even similar Irishness scores across the two sets of records. Some names such as Ryan increased in their reliability, rising from 65 per cent to 93 further back in time. The top fifteen names improved on average 20 per cent when used on the earlier set of records. This is almost certainly because fewer English-born descendants of Irish immigrants lived in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth, and shows that the distance in time between the 1841 census and 1801 does not impact the usefulness of an onomastic approach in identifying the Irish in London.



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<sup>47</sup> If a vagrant was traveling with a wife or children, then a name was only counted once per family group to reduce the influence of large families. In total there are 14,790 individuals in these 11,016 groupings. *Vagrancy Lives*.

<sup>48</sup> The surnames list correctly identified the Irish settlement of 642 out of 776 matching individuals. There were 2,559 Irish vagrants in the whole sample.



Four hundred and two Irish-born accused in the *MCR* were missed by the surnames list. A closer look at the missed entries reveals that seemingly British names appear to be far more common than one might have expected, affecting 172 of the missed entries – 30 per cent of the entire Irish-born group in the *MCR*.<sup>49</sup> These names include Smith, Jones, Brown, and Davis, which are British names that may be tied to the descendants of settlers. This suggests the surnames on this list are more useful for identifying Irish Catholics and anyone using a surname analysis should keep this in mind. Another factor is Anglicisation. Writing in 1853, James MacGrady suggested many Irish surnames had undergone transformations as they moved from oral Irish to written English.<sup>50</sup> According to Nollaig Ó Muraíle a large proportion of Irish words had never been written down prior to the Ordnance surveys of the 1830s and in many cases the first time an Irish term found its way onto paper was at the hand of an Englishman.<sup>51</sup> This introduced a level of Anglicisation that can cause problems for the present task, particularly as it relates to spellings.<sup>52</sup> Mac Giolla Padraig (son of Patrick) became *Kilpatrick*, *Kirkpatrick*, *MacFeteridge*, *MacFadzean*, and *MacFadden*, and may even have become *Pattison* or *Patterson* amongst settlers who ended up in England.<sup>53</sup>

Even within the early nineteenth century it was not uncommon to find two different spellings of a single individual's name. This is because the English hand that wrote the name down often heard it spoken rather than saw it on paper,

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<sup>49</sup> The very Anglo/Welsh names are: Adams, Allen, Barnes, Barrett, Bennett, Berry, Blake, Bowen, Bradley, Brett, Brown, Browne, Bryant, Butler, Cannon, Castle, Clark, Clarke, Clifford, Coleman, Collins, Dalton, Davis, Dawson, Dean, Dennis, Dixon, Drew, Dunn, Eaton, Edwards, Ellis, Farr, Ford, Freeman, Fuller, Gibson, Gill, Green, Gregory, Harris, Harrison, Hart, Hawkins, Heath, Hewitt, Higgins, Holden, Holland, Holmes, Holt, Howard, Howell, Hudson, Hughes, Johnson, Jones, Jordan, Keen, Lamb, Lee, Lewis, Lovell, Lyon, Mansfield, Marshall, Martin, Matthews, Mead, Millar, Moore, Newland, Nicholas, Norton, Osborne, Owen, Pearce, Potter, Reed, Reynolds, Roberts, Robinson, Russell, Shaw, Slater, Small, Smith, Steward, Taylor, Thompson, Thornton, Townsend, Walker, Wall, Walter, Ware, Warren, Webb, White, Wilkinson, Williams, Wills, Wilson, Winter, Wise, and Wood, all of which have an Anglo/Welsh score of at least 80 and appear in the census sample at least 50 times.

<sup>50</sup> James MacGrady, 'Irish Surnames: Their Past and Present Forms', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 1 (1853), 117-119.

<sup>51</sup> Nollaig Ó Muraíle, 'Some Thoughts on Matters Onomastic', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 53 (2001), 25.

<sup>52</sup> See John MacNeill, 'Part 3. Place-Names and Family Names', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section B: Biological, Geological, and Chemical Science*, 31 (1915 [1911]), 42.

<sup>53</sup> See Lawlor, 'The Origins of Some Common Surnames'; John Ryan, 'Irish Family Names (Continued)', *The Irish Monthly*, 45 (1917), 331-336.

which may explain why some Irish-born defendants, such as Edmund Nowlan who was tried for theft in 1802, had an Irish name in one record, and a more geographically ambiguous name (Noulan) in another record.<sup>54</sup> What name he actually used is anyone's guess – he may have in fact been unaware of the difference – but it is easy to imagine how his Irish accent could have been to blame for the misinterpretation.

Unfortunately, very little can be done to classify individuals with Anglo/Welsh names using surname analysis, because to do so would involve wrongly classifying dozens or perhaps hundreds of English people as Irish. An analysis of forenames may prove useful, but was not part of the current study. Based on the limits of the current methodology, readers can expect that roughly one third of relevant individuals will be classifiable and one third of relevant individuals will be missed. Now to turn to the final third.

The remaining one third of outstanding individuals have names that fall into one of three categories:

1. Non-Irish surnames
2. Names that do not appear in the 1841 census
3. Names that are borderline Irish – those with Irishness scores between 30 and 50, and those uncommon names removed in the previous section.

One could add all of these names to the list to capture this remaining one third of entrants, since there is evidence of their Irish connection. However, the remaining names include obvious homonyms of common Irish names, which can increase the number of matches without straying from names that already show strong Irish scores. Based on this new evidence, *Bryan* can be classified as a variant of *Brian*, as can *Callahan* of *Callaghan* and *Donahough*, *Donohew*, *Donohugh* of *Donoghue*. As a result, an additional 58 Irish-born entrants can be identified that had previously been missed.

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<sup>54</sup> 'April 1802, trial of Edmund Nowlan (t18020428-74)', *OBPO*; HO 26, Middlesex, (1801-1805), Piece 8, Page 95.

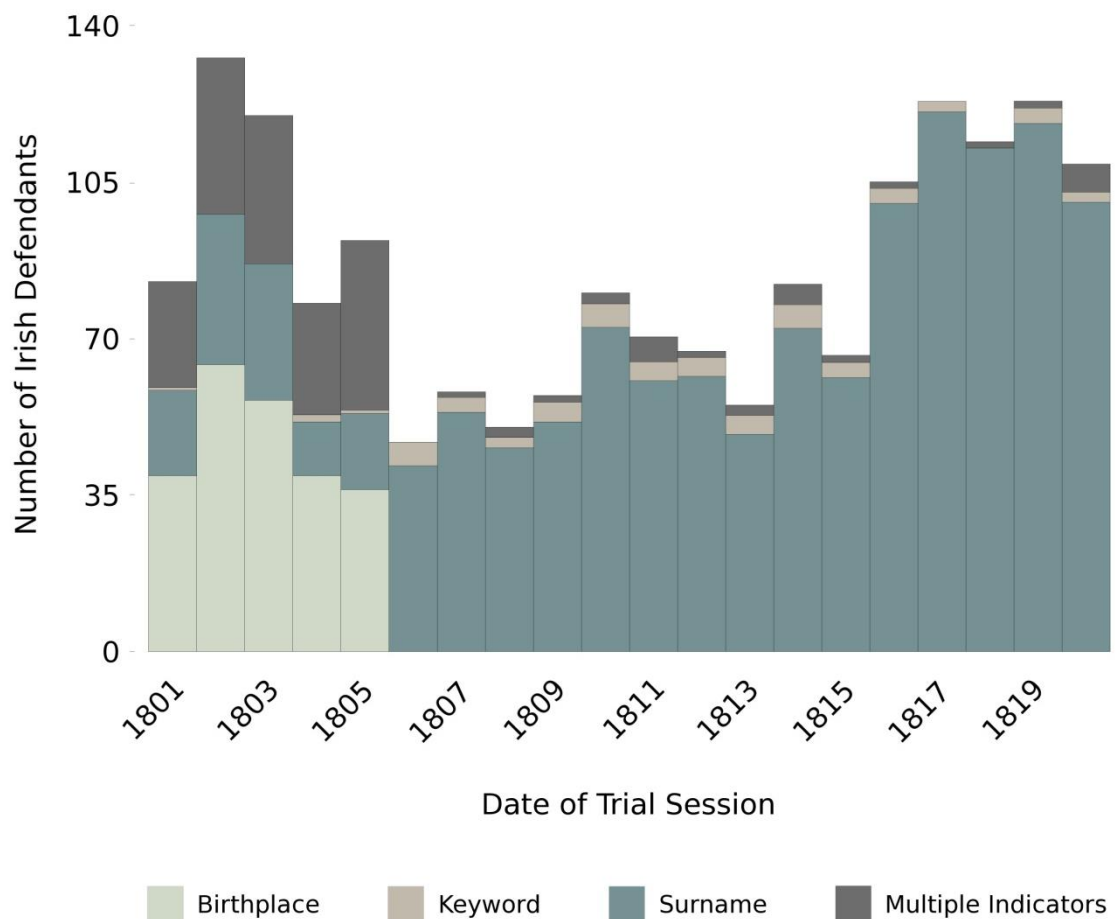
Homonyms did not appear equally across all three groups. The group of non-Irish names revealed only four additional entries. Twenty eight per cent of names that did not appear in the census were classified. The group of borderline Irish surnames saw even better results, with 57 per cent of those entries now classifiable.

Homonym matching using Soundex identified an additional 37 variant spellings of common Irish surnames and made it possible to increase the effectiveness of the surnames list in this case by another 58 good results, 8 neutral results and only 10 poor results. Adding these names to the list was thus worthwhile. The final result of this expanded list of Irish surnames is the ability to accurately identify 228 out of 572 Irish-born individuals in the *MCR*, representing a good result rate of 39.8 per cent. The neutral results – those born in the London area, accounted for 74 individuals (13 per cent), and the poor results were only 32 (5 per cent). This new tool based on surname analysis therefore shows promise for historians looking for relevant individuals with a probable Irish connection.

### ***The Best Way to Identify the Irish in Texts***

This chapter started with a challenge: how best to identify Irish defendants in a set of historical records to end up with the most comprehensive set of results possible. The solution to this problem in this case was threefold, using nominal record linkage, keyword searching, and surname analysis. The results of this work can be seen in Figure 4.9, which includes the updated results from the various refinements discussed above. Using these combined indicators 1,712 individual defendants – 6.7 per cent of all defendants who appeared before an Old Bailey justice in the early decades of the nineteenth century – were identified.

When it is possible to use a set of corroborating records that can identify the Irish with a high degree of confidence, nominal record linkage is the most academically rigorous approach a historian can apply. Using the *MCR*, 387



**Figure 4.9: The final set of identified defendants.**

The final 1,712 probable Irish defendants tried at the Old Bailey, graphed by year and identifiable by birthplace, relevant geographical keywords, and surname analysis using the MCR, OBOP, and the 1841 census.

probable Irish defendants were linked to their *OBP* trial account, providing a reliable set of records. The downside of nominal record linkage was the lack of data for the years 1806 to 1820 because of a lack of corroborating records, and a heavy reliance upon birthplace as the only acceptable indicator of Irishness – a problematic claim. The task of linking records is incredibly laborious, requiring thousands of individual judgments, so performing this type of research is expensive. For this project linking took slightly more than one week of full time work, but could easily have taken months and thousands of pounds of a research budget had the records not already been transcribed into a digital format. The output is also inflexible, tying together two sets of documents, but *only* two sets of documents. No generalised results can be taken away and applied to another set of sources. For example, linking these records taught us nothing that would

allow us to identify newspaper articles about the Irish in London, or to isolate Irish paupers in workhouse registers.

Keyword searching did identify a handful of relevant entries, but was largely unfruitful when applied to this specific set of records. Using thirty-seven major Irish place names as keywords only 98 probable Irish defendants were identified. Almost half of these were identifiable using other means, making this approach expensive, considering the results. Identifying relevant individuals using keywords is not just a matter of typing a keyword into a search box. Each match must be manually interpreted by the researcher and may require reading several pages of text to make an informed decision. The sheer number of false positives made this a very time-consuming exercise, taking almost thirty minutes of work for each good result. Unlike with nominal record linkage, these results are more generally useful in the sense that these thirty-seven keywords could be used again to search a newspaper database, in which the keywords may prove more useful because of the different nature of the content.

Finally, surname analysis made it possible to identify a further 1,242 individuals that had otherwise evaded detection using more traditional historical techniques. These extra results span all twenty years of the study period and may represent as much as 40 per cent of the actual Irish defendants in London (migrants and those of Irish descent). Through validation, the set of Irish surnames created has been shown reliable, producing far more good results than poor. It also drew our attention to the London-born offspring of previous Irish immigrants in a way that none of the other methods allowed.

Despite its limits and the inevitability of at least some false positives, the surname analysis is also entirely reusable. Though it too took a tremendous amount of labour – several times more in fact than the nominal record linkage or keyword searching approaches – for those working on London in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, that work is now complete and can be repurposed by any researcher (see Appendix I for the full set of Irish surnames). I would suggest that anyone interested in this group of predominantly Catholic Irish in London or

the southeast between c. 1700 and 1850 now has a tool at hand with which to efficiently identify relevant materials for further study. This is particularly useful for anyone studying historical demography and focusing on the Irish, but it could also be applied to individuals of other nationalities. It is most appropriate for large-scale analyses that look for trends across thousands of similar sources, such as evidence of Irish involvement in crime, poverty, or in generating migration statistics. It would be far less useful for studies dependent upon close readings of sources pertaining to a small number of individuals, in which a few anomalies could drastically reduce the accuracy level. The present study has shown that these three methods of searching together were able to identify roughly 40 per cent of the Irish in the records under review, which many statisticians and demographers would likely consider a generous sample size. Though there were thousands of records under investigation, only 32 false positive matches were found. With the option for quickly repurposing this surnames analysis tool, new doors are open for studying the Irish in London. The connection between surnames and Irishness in the early nineteenth century is firmly established.



While this analysis proved useful, there is certainly room to improve upon the practices conducted. It is well within the realm of possibility to drastically increase the number of homonyms of Irish root surnames. Using a much larger sample of surnames – a modern census for example, someone could identify many more unique spellings that did not appear in either the 1841 census or the MCR. This could also be done using a linguistic measure known as Levenshtein distance, or edit-distance, which measures and numerically expresses the number of changes you must make to one word to turn it into another. *Donovan* and *Donavan* have a Levenshtein distance of 1; that is, we have to change only a single character (o to a) to go from one name to the other. Using this measure we can certainly put forth a strong argument that these two names are linguistically related. Using this technique we would have been alerted to the possibility that Edmund Nowlan and Edmund Noulan were the same person in the example

above. Unfortunately we cannot apply Levenshtein distance indiscriminately. *Gill* and *Mill* have a Levenshtein distance of 1, as do *Riley* and *Wiley* despite being unique names in their own rights.

Levenshtein distance would also almost certainly miss *Wallace* and *Wallis*, which may too refer to the same person or to blood relatives. This is the case for Ann Wallace, who was tried for theft in 1803. Ann appears as Ann Wallace in the *OBP* and by the homonym Ann Wallis in the Criminal Register when she was originally admitted to jail to await trial.<sup>55</sup> The Levenshtein distance of *Wallace* and *Wallis* is 3, requiring three changes to the first name to create the second. Ironically, this is the same number of changes required to convert *Water* into *Wine*, which suggests only a miracle, or an extremely complicated algorithm would help us to identify the similarities between Wallace and Wallis using Levenshtein distance. A combination of Levenshtein distance and the Soundex algorithm could be used in a custom computer program that could both carefully and significantly expand the number of useful homonyms and spelling variations in our Irish surnames list without sacrificing accuracy.

Another approach for identifying Irish defendants is through an algorithm known as a 'Naïve Bayes classifier'. This algorithm takes a set of pre-vetted relevant sources as input. Using Bayesian statistics, the program is able to suggest additional pertinent materials for close reading from within a larger collection of materials, despite having no direct evidence that might suggest the source was relevant. Since we have a set of pre-vetted sources in the Irish-born group from the MCR, we have all of the tools required to undertake this type of analysis, should we so desire. William J. Turkel has previously used this approach on the *OBP* to great effect to automatically identify probable larceny trials based on machine learning.<sup>56</sup> This too may be useful for identifying additional Irish defendants, but this work has not yet been pursued.

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<sup>55</sup> 'October 1803, trial of Ann Wallace (t18031026-18)', *OBPO*; HO 26, Middlesex (1801-1805), Piece 9, Page 130.

<sup>56</sup> Turkel, 'A Naïve Bayesian'.

As many before me have noted, a digital humanities tool is never truly finished; rather it built to a level that its creator finds useful and then he or she moves on. The possibility to continually update a digital humanities project such as this can paralyse future development and therefore I will leave it to others to build upon this work. With roughly 40 per cent of the Irish defendants in London identified in the criminal trials and only 32 known errors across thousands of entries, this tool will now be tested in a series of historical case studies that look at Irish criminality and conflict in early nineteenth-century London, to determine the effectiveness of this approach for historical research.



## **Part 2: Historical Case Studies to Test Surname Analysis**



## 5. Distant Reading to Measure Irish Conflict in London

In the previous chapter I developed and validated a tool based on surname analysis that explored how historians could identify the subset of London criminals who most likely had Irish roots. That subset includes both migrants with an Irish birthplace and the descendants of long-time London residents. This group is both the most realistic for a semi-automated approach like surname analysis to identify, but I also believe it is a better definition of the Irish in London at the turn of the nineteenth century, incorporating a much larger number of relevant people than can be done by limiting oneself to recent migrants alone.

Given the fact that we know surname analysis will at times mis-classify people as Irish on an individual level, it is most prudent to use in a ‘distant reading’ (described below) of the primary source material. Historians should be wary of relying on a close reading of material related to any one individual identified through surname analysis alone, as this may result in unsupported conclusions. With that caveat, in this chapter I will demonstrate how that subset can allow historians to look for trends in the trials and crimes of Irish defendants identified in the previous chapter that are not obvious using traditional historical approaches, and how that can lead to a series of hypotheses about the combined experience of the Irish in London during the early nineteenth-century. In subsequent chapters, I will endeavour to test those hypotheses using a close reading of the evidence to determine the value of this surname analysis approach for historical study. In the process I will also seek to build our understanding of the Irish experience in early nineteenth-century London.

That search for understanding will focus on evidence of Irish conflict in London. Ethnic communities, including the Irish, did not always get along with their new neighbours. Clashes of cultures, perceived differences, xenophobia, or merely personal dislike of individuals meant that confrontations between natives and newcomers were not uncommon. Evidence of disputes and conflict resolution strategies can therefore be a helpful lens through which to explore the

experience of the Irish in London at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Thankfully, the early nineteenth century provides us with just the sources (felonious crime records), in just the right format (machine-readable text), to be able to make the most of a social scientific approach that will allow us to identify the trends most worthy of further analysis that might not otherwise be visible through close reading alone.

Felonies in particular are an interesting window into community harmony.

Felonies form a class of serious crimes – killing, theft, rape, burglary, treason, offences against the currency, and highway robbery for example – and conviction came with forfeiture of property to the crown, as well as, in many cases, loss of life or liberty.<sup>1</sup> Felonies were distinct from the lesser but more prevalent category of crimes called misdemeanors – prostitution, gambling, keeping an unlicensed alehouse, neglect of office, vagrancy, defamation, etc. Misdemeanours came with sentences such as fines, corporal punishment, or short imprisonments.<sup>2</sup> The remaining chapters of this thesis will focus on that more serious category of crime: felonies, in which the defendant's life or future was on the line. This class of conflict represents a much more serious breakdown in local harmony than a misdemeanor and can shed light on how the Anglo-Irish relationship was played out on the streets when something went very wrong.

The records found in the *OBP* are an obvious place for a historian to look for evidence of felonious conflicts in London. The *Proceedings* (also known as the 'Sessions Papers') are a complete set of surviving trial accounts, and with significant exceptions in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, provide details of each trial heard in the Old Bailey courthouse from shortly before the Glorious Revolution to the onset of the Great War. During the twenty-year period that is the focus of this study, the Old Bailey administered 20,705

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<sup>1</sup> Until 1814 all convicted felons risked loss of their land and worldly goods; after 1814 loss of land was only at risk for murderers, and those convicted of treason or petty treason, while forfeiture of goods continued for all. How widespread the practice of forfeiture actually was is more difficult to measure. See: K.J. Kesselring, 'Felons' Effects and the Effects of Felony in Nineteenth-Century England', *The Historical Journal*, 53 (2010).

<sup>2</sup> Shoemaker, *Prosecution and Punishment*, 6.

trials involving 25,267 defendants.<sup>3</sup> The corpus of accounts for these trials include 11,335,331 words of text, roughly eleven times longer than Samuel Richardson's mammoth novel *Clarissa*.<sup>4</sup> A close reading of the entire set of even twenty years is impractical; to get at the heart of this relationship, I will adopt a distant reading approach.

Distant reading is an umbrella term for a range of practices aimed at extracting targeted knowledge from a text or texts without actually reading them. The name 'distant reading' is just over a decade old, coined by Italian literary scholar Franco Moretti in 2000; however, Moretti merely named a practice that had much earlier roots and has been popular in literary and linguistic circles for years.<sup>5</sup> Distant reading can involve simplifying texts into something that takes less time to ingest and interpret. It is often performed with computers, and may be labeled the domain of digital humanists or digital historians. For many who pride themselves on their close reading skills, distant reading may be seen as a form of imprecise or careless analysis. It is inherently reductionist, turning millions of words of text into a graphic, or a few sentences. The exchange invariably involves some loss of detail, however the practice has several advantages for a project such as this.

There have always been more books in the library and more documents in the archives than any one researcher could read in a lifetime. Distant reading allows the researcher to look at far more material on a related topic than is possible or practical to read. It also means that measurable trends are easier to calculate because a computer can hold and process far more complex data than can an unaided human mind. Distant reading is an ever-evolving process that grows with the imagination of researchers who continue to find new ways to employ its various forms. In the context of criminal trial accounts in the early nineteenth century, a distant reading could be as simple as plotting the number of

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<sup>3</sup> There are certainly repeat offenders listed amongst those 25,267 defendants, but exactly how many is difficult to discern. My estimate is that roughly 90 per cent represent unique individuals.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (London, 1751) is widely regarded as the longest novel written before the twentieth century – nearly double the length of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

<sup>5</sup> Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature', 54–68.

defendants per year on a graph and critically interpreting the results. That analysis would provide the researcher with evidence that might be worth a closer look. A spike in the number of trials – or indeed a drop – suggests something changed. In some instances a lack of change may be equally interesting. It is up to the historian then to determine what changed and what the significance of that change is. Though distant reading may not provide the answers to historical questions, it does point historians to curious phenomena that might not otherwise be visible.

Mass digitisation projects led by national libraries and scholarly initiatives mean that so much more primary source material is at our fingertips than ever before. The most notable mass digitisation initiatives by the first decade of the twenty-first century included *Project Gutenberg*, *JSTOR*, *Early English Books Online*, *Million Book Project*, *British History Online*, *Google Books*, and *The Times Digital Archive*.<sup>6</sup> These represent merely a tiny fraction of the projects that have brought large amounts of content online in the past decade and a half. This led scholars such as Gregory Crane to begin asking just what one could do with such a large corpus of texts.<sup>7</sup> A collaborative team of Google and the members of the Harvard Cultural Observatory led by Erez Lieberman Aiden and Jean-Baptist Michel have done their best to answer that question with their now famous *Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books*, which garnered a great deal of attention when it was published in 2011.<sup>8</sup> That work quantitatively measured attributes found in 5,195,769 books, representing over 360 billion words of English-language text, looking for changes in cultural indicators such as the levels of fame of noteworthy people over time, or the development of English irregular verbs.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Project Gutenberg' (1971-2014), <http://www.gutenberg.org/>; 'JSTOR' (1995-2014), <http://www.jstor.org/>; 'Early English Books Online - EEBO' (2000-2010), <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>; 'Million Book Project' (2001-2007), <http://archive.org/details/millionbooks>; 'British History Online' (version 4.0, 2003-2014), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>; 'Google Books' (2004-2014), <http://books.google.com/>; 'Times Digital Archive', <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/times.aspx/>.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory Crane, 'What Do You Do with a Million Books?', *D-Lib Magazine*, 12 (2006), doi:10.1045/march2006-crane.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Baptiste Michel *et al.*, 'Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books', *Science*, 331 (2011), 176–182.

Not all distant reading projects are as broad as this in scope, and new user-friendly tools have made distant reading much more accessible in the past decade. Stéphane Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell have been leaders in facilitating this interdisciplinary skills exchange in the digital era. The pair's tools, including *Voyant* and the *TAPoR Tools Portal*, have put textual analysis into the realm of even novice computer users by inviting scholars to 'reveal' their texts using a range of online tools that require no programming or advanced mathematical knowledge.<sup>9</sup> This type of software has allowed historians to begin learning new ways to extract information from a text without reading its content.

At the time of writing, distant reading in historical research is an object of controversy. Despite great enthusiasm for distant reading amongst some scholars, some academics disdain or distrust the process. In the latter group are scholars such as Stephen Marche who are unequivocally opposed to distant reading, insisting that 'literature is not data' and that 'insights remain handmade'.<sup>10</sup> Disdainful extremists such as Marche contribute very little if anything new to the discussion of distant reading and will perhaps never be won over. In the latter group of historians are those who would call themselves distrustful or merely critical, rather than disdainful. It is this more moderate group with whom I believe greater dialogue is needed to address some of the valid concerns that exist about the techniques under the distant reading umbrella.

There are a number of issues that conservative close-reading historians and distant-reading historians need to work out before the trust between the two groups is secured; I believe at this stage one issue stands out above all others: the importance of understanding one's historical material and asking appropriate questions. Andrew Gelman's satirical article, 'How many zombies do you know?' highlights this issue of asking inappropriate questions of inappropriate sources by suggesting an indirect way of deriving the size of the zombie population. His suggestion is based on his previous work estimating the

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<sup>9</sup> Sinclair, Stéfan, Geoffrey Rockwell and the Voyant Tools Team, *Voyant Tools* - web application (2012), <http://voyant-tools.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Marche, 'Literature is not Data: Against Digital Humanities', *Los Angeles Review of Books*, (28 October 2012), <http://www.lareviewofbooks.org/article.php?id=1040&fulltext=1>.

size and shape of an individual's personal network by asking them how many prisoners they know.<sup>11</sup> While this technique may work for prisoners, it most certainly does not work for zombies.

Gelman is specifically critiquing those who survey people for their opinions, but the lesson translates effectively to historical research, because like Gelman, conservative historians merely want to ensure that a distant reading of historical material comes from an informed and appropriate analysis of the sources. Though distant reading is not new, many see it as representative of a new set of skills, often a series of advanced computational aptitudes that they themselves may not possess (or of an old set of skills – cliometrics – which some believe proved itself wanting long ago and has therefore had its day). From the perspective of these scholars, new aptitudes should not come at the expense of the core skills and standards that historians are expected to maintain and employ in their research. For many historians, that means close reading must support the findings made through distant reading. I will take the same approach in this study in an effort to demonstrate that a distant reading, followed by a close reading, can be an effective way of making new discoveries about the past that would likely otherwise have gone undetected due to the sheer volume of material under review, as well as the limits of close reading itself. Distant reading is not at odds with close reading; it is a complement. A close reading can reinforce the scholar's confidence in what was discovered via distant reading, and I believe, work towards convincing skeptics of distant reading that it has a valuable place in scholarly practice.

The approach I will use is to first undertake a distant reading of the machine-readable version of the *Old Bailey Proceedings* looking for trends or evidence that might not otherwise be obvious through close reading and that are relevant to our understanding of the relationship between the Irish and the people of London. This involves studying the 1,712 Irish defendants identified in the previous chapter and analysing how that subset of defendants compares to the

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<sup>11</sup> Andrew Gelman, "How Many Zombies Do You Know?" Using Indirect Survey Methods to Measure Alien Attacks and Outbreaks of the Undead' (12 March 2010), <http://www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/unpublished/>.

remaining 23,555 individuals charged with felonies during the same period. The goal of this distant reading is both to test conventional wisdom about the Irish and crime in London, and also to identify new aspects of the relationship between the Irish and non-Irish. This latter approach is one that Tim Hitchcock referred to as ‘open-eyed’ and it involves looking at ‘endless iterations of the material, cut and sliced in different ways’.<sup>12</sup> Rather than suggest that this involves wandering around collecting low-hanging fruit, I think it is better to think of it as an approach designed to allow the sources themselves to act as a signpost, pointing the researcher in the direction of things that might be interesting. It is then up to the historian to decide if each is in fact interesting, and the historical significance of any discoveries.

This distant reading has directed me towards three areas in particular that I believe are worth pursuing further and that could provide new insight into the relationship between the Irish and non-Irish Londoners in the early nineteenth century capital. The first challenges conventional wisdom about what we can know about Irish crime patterns from the sources available to us by looking at changing trends in prosecutions for currency-related offences. The second points to a distinct trend in seasonal migration amongst the Irish that might be the key to understanding why Irish defendants found themselves on trial in the first place. The third suggests major external events such as wars and weather may help explain how Irish immigration and reactions to it were linked to issues beyond the immediate neighbourhood. This chapter will show how these three areas were identified through distant reading. Three subsequent chapters will engage with each issue in turn to determine if the distant reading returned useful results, or if the process produced red herrings.

### ***Preparing for Distant Reading***

For the uninitiated, distant reading can look like a matter of pushing a button and getting the answers. Even with user-friendly tools such as *Voyant*, this is rarely the case. Instead, scholarly distant reading involves a three-step process:

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<sup>12</sup> Hitchcock, ‘the Headache of Big Data’.



1. Understanding the provenance of the sources and how they were brought into a digital format.
2. Reflecting on the types of analyses that may be appropriate to answer the types of questions in which one is interested, keeping the limitations of the sources in mind.
3. Converting the data into the correct format for analysis, known as ‘data cleansing’ or ‘cleaning’.

### 1) Understanding the Sources

The *Proceedings of the Old Bailey* provide an abridged transcription of what was said in court for each case held in the Old Bailey courtroom during this period. What we have is not an exact facsimile of every word spoken, but what Magnus Huber believes is a record that was ‘guided by’ what was said in court, capturing the ideas if not always the exact words of the speaker.<sup>13</sup> Though not a perfect transcription of speech, Clive Emsley believes that we can put our faith in the events described in the *Proceedings* because ‘the Old Bailey Courthouse was a public place, with numerous spectators, and the reputation of the *Proceedings* would have quickly suffered if the accounts had been unreliable’. By the early nineteenth century the *Proceedings* were read mainly by lawyers and government officials, and since 1778 were intended to act as an enduring record and were thus required to be a ‘true, fair and perfect narrative’.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, Emsley points out that several types of information were routinely or semi-routinely omitted from the published account – the judge’s summary of events, the names of the lawyers, the defendant’s statement, and so on. While truth, fairness, and perfection were goals of those commissioning the *Proceedings* we must also remember that there were practical limits to consider. This work all had to be done by furiously scribbling shorthand reporters and it had to be

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<sup>13</sup> Magnus Huber, ‘The Old Bailey Proceedings, 1674-1834: Evaluating and Annotating a Corpus of 18th- and 19th-century Spoken English’, in Anneli Meurman-Solin and Arja Nurmi (eds.), *Annotating Variation and Change* (Helsinki, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock, and Robert Shoemaker, ‘The Proceedings - The Value Of the Proceedings as a Historical Source’, *OBPO*, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Value.jsp>.

printed on paper, which cost money. Many trials therefore appear in significantly condensed form. To show this abridgment in action, Emsley, Hitchcock, and Shoemaker give the example of a six-hour trial from 1787 that is recorded in only 468 words in the published version.<sup>15</sup> Robert Shoemaker pointed to the writings of Thomas Gurney, one of the scribes of the *Proceedings*, who noted that he routinely edited what had happened in court:

It is my method, if a question brings out an imperfect answer, and is obliged to be asked over again, and the answer comes more strong, I take that down as the proper evidence, and neglect the other...it is not to be expected that I should write every unintelligible word that is said by the evidence.<sup>16</sup>

Shoemaker also adds that though the aim was to create a 'true and perfect narrative', the *Proceedings* are the product of a publication and administrative process, and that at least some Londoners would have read them skeptically. He notes that we as historians should do the same.<sup>17</sup> I believe that these limitations caused by their abridgement during the process of converting the real events onto paper make them best suited to a distant reading approach. We may not be able to trust the dialogue as a faithful transcript, but we can generally believe the major details that appear as standard pieces of information, making it much easier to conduct an apples-to-apples comparison. It is nearly always possible to determine what crime was committed, who allegedly committed the crime, against whom, what verdict the jury conferred, and what punishment the magistrate decreed. Many accounts include much more information, such as witness testimony, but nearly all cases between 1801 and 1820 contain the aforementioned basics.

To highlight those aspects that trials held in common and to open up access to the material to many more researchers, the records underwent a transformation in 2001 into an electronic format by the *Old Bailey Online* team, which makes the

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<sup>15</sup> The trial in question was that of Charles Stokes and his accomplices: 'September 1787, trial of Charles Stokes, William Bramsley, George Nadan, William Lamb (t17870912-114)', *OBPO*.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Robert Shoemaker, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings and the Representation of Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (2008), 566.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 580.

records particularly useful for distant reading.<sup>18</sup> The *Old Bailey Online* project converted these millions of words of printed text into fully searchable and mutable machine-readable text. Trials during the period of interest were transcribed entirely using a process of double-rekeying, in which two different typists separately input all of the text. The two texts are then compared and any discrepancies are manually corrected. This process attempts to minimise errors by assuming two typists are unlikely to make the same mistakes, ensuring that the electronic-text is remarkably accurate.<sup>19</sup> At this stage, the *Old Bailey Online* was effectively a large text file containing the words for the original *Proceedings* in an electronic format that was easy to share and search.

The team then took this one step further and once finished, the entire database of trials was marked up with Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) compliant Extensible Markup Language (XML).<sup>20</sup> This meant each trial now had metadata associated with it that could be interpreted by a computer. For example, the date of the trial session, the name of the defendant(s), the crime committed, and the verdict were all stored alongside the full text of the trial in a machine-readable format. These XML tags were added in a semi-automated fashion, with a research assistant responsible for a cursory reading of each trial, doing the work that a computer could not. Though William J. Turkel's use of a Naïve Bayes classifier showed that some trials could conceivably fall into multiple crime categories, in this author's opinion the results are very reliable and as the few discrepancies in the tagging will disappear in an analysis of a large number of entries, they pose little threat to a wider analysis.<sup>21</sup> A more complete picture of which criteria were used to tag the trials can be found on the project wiki.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The large *Old Bailey Online* team included many people with a range of skills. The full list of team members can be found on the project team webpage.

(<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Project.jsp#projectstaff>)

<sup>19</sup> For a review of the accuracy of the transcriptions, see Crymble, 'Fixing Transcription Errors.'

<sup>20</sup> For more on the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), see: <http://www.tei-c.org/>

<sup>21</sup> Turkel, 'A Naïve Bayesian'.

<sup>22</sup> 'CCC Project Wiki' (8 May 2008), <http://crimbleb.group.shef.ac.uk/wiki/pmwiki.php/Main/HomePage>.

## 2) Appropriate Forms of Distant Reading

What the tags allow is a form of distant reading; rather than read all 8,000 words of John Tennant's trial account to determine what he had been accused of and what happened to him, the XML allows the researcher to find many of these answers quickly, as can be seen in Table 5.1. This not only acts as a timesaver for those wanting to know about John Tennant's particular case, but also makes it possible to retrieve similar trials without having to read through every case in the paper records. Someone studying burglary now has the means of finding all burglary cases very efficiently. Researchers can of course be much more discerning in the trials that interest them. It would be possible to isolate all trials of crimes committed by females on Tuesdays involving the theft of silver, for example, which is not practical to undertake using a paper version of the *Proceedings*.

**Table 5.1: The XML Metadata for John Tennant's 1805 trial in the Old Bailey Proceedings.** <sup>23</sup>

XML Tag	XML Value
Defendant Name	John Tennant
Date of Trial Session	9 January 1805
Offence	Theft → Burglary
Verdict	Guilty
Punishment	Death

Thanks to this digital transformation of trial accounts that were originally written as a series of reports designed to be useful to nineteenth-century lawyers, researchers have the option of exploring the characteristics of the trials and no longer need to read the account's text to learn this information. This certainly does not make the accounts obsolete, but it does allow for a scholarly distant reading of the cases heard before the magistrates of the Old Bailey.

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<sup>23</sup> 'January 1805, trial of John Tennent (t18050109-14)', *OBPO*.

Apart from their efficiency when it comes to sorting or isolating relevant trials, the tags have other important advantages: they represent a limited vocabulary. A limited vocabulary means each type of tag has a finite number of possible values.

A defendant can be guilty or not guilty. A judge can punish them with corporal punishment, a fine, imprisonment, transportation, or death. They can be charged with one of fifty-six different types of crime. While that has the negative effect of lumping people together and ironing out the nuances between them (is theft of a loaf of bread the same as theft of a large amount of jewelry?), by limiting the number of choices the taggers could use when creating the metadata for each trial, the *Old Bailey Online* team has made it much easier for a researcher using those tags to identify similar trials. It also becomes possible to ask questions such as: did the Irish defendants appear more frequently for violent theft than the non-Irish? Were Irish women more likely to shoplift than Irish men? Was there an increase over time in Irish prosecutions? The systematic nature of the sources and the limited vocabulary of the tags makes it possible to take a quantitative and comparative approach to crime analysis by looking at trials over a long period of time, in a way that would not be practical otherwise. Therefore, the distant reading performed in this chapter will focus on the XML tags as the basis for analysis.

As the previous chapter identified a subset of Irish defendants, this distant reading will explore ways in which the Irish defendants appear differently or unexpectedly across the twenty-year period. To do this systematically is currently not possible, as there are many possible combinations of defendants that could be tested, as the example above of Irish women stealing silver on Tuesdays highlights. This distant reading is therefore not intended to be *the* distant reading of the Irish in the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*. Rather, it is an attempt to focus on aspects of Irish crime that are pervasive in the literature – both contemporary and modern historiographical – which can be tested reliably within the constraints of the sources available.

### 3) The Process of Data Cleansing

Despite the extraordinary work of the *Old Bailey Online* team, the data was not yet in the format needed to conduct an analysis of Irish defendants and it required extensive data cleansing. The *Old Bailey Online* website is organised around trials rather than individual defendants; this is a problem because many trials contain multiple defendants or defendants charged with two or more different offences at the same session of the court. Usually these defendants were co-conspirators who were brought together before the jury to explain themselves – though this is not always the case. This meant that not all defendants who appear in a single trial were charged with the same offence nor were they necessarily given the same punishment.

The 1815 trial of Philip Hood, Charles Slate, Edward Surgey, and Edward Bureau is a good example. The first three men were charged with burglary, and the last was charged with receiving the goods, knowing them to have been stolen. The XML tags for this trial do not make it clear to the researcher how to distinguish which men were charged with which crime. The tags also do not show that Surgey and Bureau were found not guilty, whereas the other two were confined to six months imprisonment. Instead, the entire trial is tagged as a [*burglary / receiving*] case, and the verdict is listed as [*guilty, guilty, not guilty, not guilty*]. This problem affected 3,304 trials and more than 7,800 defendants – almost one third tried during the period. Each of these had to be corrected largely by manually reading and interpreting the trial.

Additional information was also calculated or extracted for each defendant that might aid the distant reading process. Apart from that available explicitly through the XML tags as well as the Irishness of each surname, and keywords related to the Irish (all calculated in the previous chapter) each defendant had the following details appended to his or her record.

- Probable birth year
- Place of birth<sup>24</sup>
- Number of defendants in the corpus with the exact same name
- Number of defendants on trial in the case
- Gender mix of defendants in the trial
- Number of victims mentioned in the trial account
- Date of the crime
- Word count of the original source

Far from an automated and uncritical process, this data cleansing and appending was very hands-on and required an understanding of the records themselves as well as data-handling techniques for extracting information automatically from large bodies of text. Once completed, each defendant had his or her own set of metadata that pertained to his or her own experience in the justice system. The finished database in which the defendant rather than the trial was at the core of the organisational structure contained a combined 1.3 million data points related to the 25,267 defendants. These added pieces of metadata made it possible to test many new relationships than would have been possible with the *Old Bailey Online* data alone. With this work complete, we can now turn to a discussion of Irish crime in nineteenth-century London, which will be the focus of the distant reading, and which must be put into context.

### ***Historiography of Irish Crime in London***

There are a slew of general studies on crime and poverty in London, but very few on specific groups, let alone the Irish.<sup>25</sup> Most of the work on the Irish in London focuses on the post-famine era in Queen Victoria's long reign, during which hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants settled in Britain and transformed the

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<sup>24</sup> Extracted where available from the Middlesex Criminal Registers (National Archives: HO 26).

<sup>25</sup> Examples of non-ethnic approaches to crime and poverty include but are not limited to: Peter King, 'Gender, Crime and Justice in Late Eighteenth - and Early Nineteenth-century England', in Margaret L. Arnot and Cornelia Osborne (eds.), *Gender and Crime in Modern Europe* (London, 1999), 44–74; Shore, 'Mean Streets', 151–164; Nicholas Rogers, 'Policing the Poor in Eighteenth-Century London: The Vagrancy Laws and Their Administration', *Social History*, 24 (1991), 127–147; Hitchcock, *Down and Out*.

demographic makeup of British society. With regards to the Irish, contemporaries in Victorian England and historians of the period seemed to agree: the Irish were overrepresented in criminal activity – particularly in cases of violence and petty theft. Roger Swift is one of the few willing to put a number to just how overrepresented the Irish were. Swift suggests that in the Victorian era the group were five times as likely to face prosecution as the non-Irish.<sup>26</sup>

Nineteenth-century social commentators were quick to jump upon extreme examples to highlight the dangers of uncontrollable Irishmen. John Tenniel perhaps best shows this through his 1882 editorial cartoon ‘The Irish Frankenstein’. The cartoon appeared in *Punch* magazine shortly after the assassinations of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Henry Burke in Dublin’s Phoenix Park in that same year. In the cartoon, Tenniel depicts a masked, leering Irishman menacingly gripping a blood-drenched blade as a respectable Englishman cowers in the background. The cartoon was an immediate commentary on a specific event, but underpinned a wider view of Irish criminality in the latter years of the nineteenth century. It has since become iconic of this view of the potential violence of the Irish, as seen through contemporary English eyes.

The Irish penchant for violence and crime was widely accepted at the time; according to J.M. Feheney, contemporary Victorian writers believed London gaols were swarming with the Irish.<sup>27</sup> Swift agrees, but suggests Irish crime was generally petty and not particularly serious, involving drunkenness, disorderly behaviour and assault. He suggests the Irish may have found themselves frequently facing misdemeanours rather than more serious charges.<sup>28</sup> Swift’s assessment certainly seems to coincide with contemporary opinion. As mentioned in a footnote in Chapter 3 (Who were the Irish in London?), an innkeeper speaking to social reformer Henry Mayhew in the 1860s admitted, ‘I had rather have twenty poor Englishmen drunk in my tap-room than a couple of poor Irishmen. They’ll quarrel with anybody the Irish will – and sometimes clear

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<sup>26</sup> Swift, ‘Heroes or Villains?’, 402.

<sup>27</sup> Feheney, ‘Delinquency’, 322.

<sup>28</sup> Swift, ‘Heroes or Villains?’, 403.



the room'.<sup>29</sup> While illustrative, these perspectives are all from the Victorian-era, and are coloured by a period of intense Irish immigration during and after the famine years of the 1840s and 1850s, which sculpted Anglo-Irish relations as well as the Irish demographic in London. It is these Victorian studies by historians such as Roger Swift and J.M Feheney, which provide much of what we know of the group's experiences with the law in Britain.<sup>30</sup>

The Irish reputation for criminality does not seem to have been as strong in the eighteenth century. Perhaps this is because the size of the Irish population in Britain was not yet as large as it would be after the potato famine. During this earlier period there appear to be fewer individual disputes between English and Irish neighbours. According to Peter King, with a few exceptions the Irish are not singled out by contemporaries as particularly criminal, and are more likely to be noted for vagrancy than serious crime.<sup>31</sup> One of the instances in which the Irish were singled out was for coining related offences. Patrick Colquhoun's *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* (1800) describes the Irish as one of fourteen groups known for uttering base coinage. Yet, Irish participation in this class of crime is listed right alongside the participation of rabbit-sellers and unlicensed lottery-office keepers, suggesting the Irish were seen as part of a poverty problem rather than exclusively a criminal one.<sup>32</sup> This supports Tim Hitchcock's position in *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London*, which argued that the lines between poverty, begging, theft, and even prostitution were blurred. Necessity often meant those most in need engaged in more than one of these activities at the same time. Prostitutes often provided both sexual favours and begged (or stole) from the same person during a single encounter, suggesting it was their poverty and need that defined them more so than any activity they engaged in to relieve that poverty.<sup>33</sup> This is the economy of makeshifts that Olwen Hufton refers to in her 1974 book, *The Poor in Eighteenth Century*

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<sup>29</sup> Mayhew, *London Labour*, 114.

<sup>30</sup> Swift, 'Heroes or Villains?'; Swift, 'Crime and the Irish'; Feheney, 'Delinquency'.

<sup>31</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 3.

<sup>32</sup> Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*.

<sup>33</sup> Hitchcock, *Down and Out*.

France.<sup>34</sup> It is again described in 2003 in an edited collection of essays, *The Poor in England 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*. The editors of that volume, Tomkins and King, note that 'poor households cobbled together incomes from a wide variety of sources and benefits', eking out a fragile existence, which sometimes included a combination of work, crime, aid, begging, or prostitution.<sup>35</sup> It is the economics of getting by in an uncaring metropolis.

Despite the fact that the Irish seemed not to have a strong criminal reputation in the eighteenth century, there is evidence they were falling afoul of the law more frequently than individuals in other demographics. Peter Linebaugh's *The London Hanged* includes a chapter on doomed Irish criminals in the eighteenth century, as well as a wealth of information on the backgrounds of those people. Linebaugh showed that from 1703 to 1772 the Irish represented one in seven of those hanged in the metropolis, of whom ninety-four per cent were Catholic and a disproportionate number of those originally hailed from Dublin.<sup>36</sup> This not only suggests the Irish were over-represented on the scaffold, but is particularly interesting because it challenges the nineteenth-century assumption that the Irish in London were predominantly from rural backgrounds and ill equipped to life in an urban environment – though changing immigration patterns over the decades make it possible that both interpretations are correct.<sup>37</sup>

Linebaugh also showed that the hanged Irish were not career criminals; more than half claimed to be professionals, merchants, apprentices or qualified artisans, and another third fell under the category of sailors and soldiers. In contrast, only 8.5 per cent were country labourers, and 5 per cent were without a known trade.<sup>38</sup> If Linebaugh's figures are to be believed, this suggests that in the

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<sup>34</sup> Olwen Hufton, *The Poor in Eighteenth Century France* (Oxford, 1974).

<sup>35</sup> Alannah Tomkins and Steven King (eds.), *The Poor in England 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester, 2003), 8.

<sup>36</sup> 94 per cent of those whose religion was known were listed as Catholic. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 288.

<sup>37</sup> Feheney, 'Delinquency', 322; Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 92. M.A. Busted and R.I. Hodgson argue that the Irish who ended up in Manchester were largely rural in origin; however this is a theme that is repeated again and again in the literature, and is not exclusive to Manchester, but pervasive in Britain. Busted and Hodgson, 'Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life', 139–153.

<sup>38</sup> Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 95.

early eighteenth century at least, it was the urban-bred skilled and semi-skilled Irish that were being hanged for their involvement in capital crime in London, rather than the agricultural workers and the unskilled.

In between Linebaugh's eighteenth century study and the later Victorian era studies is our own period. Peter King's work on Irish criminality in London between 1750 and 1825 takes the most in-depth look that we have available of this interlinking era. King cross-referenced the *Middlesex Criminal Registers* of 1791 to 1805, which contain birthplace details of defendants charged with indictable offences, with the *Old Bailey Proceedings*, which contain accounts of the trials themselves.<sup>39</sup> This nominal record linkage has provided the basis for the bulk of his quantitative research into Irish criminality in London. Because of the nature of his sources, his conclusions are based primarily upon information gleaned from 1791 to 1805, despite the longer date range suggested by the title of his paper.

King's focus was on identifying anti-Irish prejudice in the justice system. He was able to conclude that while the Irish were certainly brought into the system much more frequently than their English counterparts, they did not seem to be systematically disadvantaged once their trial began. King was even able to show that the Irish were actually punished less harshly in many cases, and were sentenced to transportation up to one-third less frequently than average – finding their way instead into much shorter prison sentences. He also suggested that there was strong evidence that the Irish were involved in different classes of crime than the non-Irish: more so for highway robbery and coining offences, less so for housebreaking and animal theft.<sup>40</sup> This suggests that there was a uniquely Irish way to be criminal in London at this time.

If we follow that thread of thinking we can ask what that uniquely Irish criminal fingerprint looked like. When we do that we find Margaret Sullivan. If all Irish

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<sup>39</sup> HO 26. Presumably King actually uses the XML records of the *OBPO* to conduct this research efficiently and without having to re-transcribe or read thousands of transcripts, though he does not explicitly credit the project.

<sup>40</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 15.

female felons from early nineteenth-century London could be reduced to and represented by a single woman it would be Margaret Sullivan.<sup>41</sup> In fact, we could scarcely hope for someone more stereotypical. Irish-born, Sullivan was an immigrant to London and like so many other Irish women in the metropolis she was poor. She lived in a shared room on the northern edge of town. Perhaps ironically, that room may even have had a view of the House of Correction at Clerkenwell in which she was shortly to be imprisoned, which sat no more than a hundred metres to the east. At roughly thirty years old, she was the average age of a female Irish felon in the records. She committed the most common crime, received the most common verdict, and the most common punishment for that crime. Even her name, Sullivan, is one of the most Irish names there is. And she repeated the same criminal pattern again and again nearly as soon as she was freed from prison.

Margaret Sullivan is also the typical female felon, full stop. The non-Irish women of London had the exact same most common criminal fingerprint amongst felonious offences. The most common female felon in London was roughly 30 years old, was accused of grand larceny, convicted, and sentenced to prison. The pattern for male felons was almost identical, with transportation to Australia rather than imprisonment being the sole distinction. That applies both to Irish and non-Irish felons.

All of this is derived from a distant reading of what characteristics these female accused possessed, based on the XML tags for their trial accounts. At first glance this suggests that there was perhaps nothing distinct about Irish criminals in London; there does not appear to be a particularly *Irish* way for women to be involved in indictable crime. This of course contradicts the arguments of several contemporaries, as well as historians who have looked at Irish criminality in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century London, which we have previously discussed. The real answer is we do not know if there was a unique Irish criminal fingerprint because the records cannot tell us; the numbers found via the *Old Bailey Proceedings* do not tell the whole story. That is because the criminal trial is

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<sup>41</sup> 'February 1803, trial of Margaret Sullivan (t18030216-34)', *OBPO*.

only one step in the justice system. And it is the last step as far as this study is concerned.

Most crimes do not end in criminal trials. I would be willing to guess most crimes are never even detected. Many are detected but no obvious culprit can be identified. Even if someone is identified and accused, there are various options a victim can pursue that are not a trial by jury. Many people believed that matters could and should be settled locally whenever possible, rather than turning to the courts.<sup>42</sup> Settling the matters locally achieves the goals of the victim, who in many cases just wanted their missing items returned, without the added bother and disruption to community harmony of an official process. It also saved the victim considerable time and expense, as for most felonious crime, it was up to the victim to bring the case to justice and cover the cost of doing so.<sup>43</sup>

If that community resolution did not suit the victim, he or she could pursue the King's Justice. The first step for a victim who chose the path towards a trial was to bring forth evidence in support of the case to a magistrate. The magistrate had the power to try misdemeanors summarily, meaning crimes in this category would not find their way into our records (though sometimes misdemeanours were tried by jury at Quarter Sessions).<sup>44</sup> If the crime was deemed a serious indictable-only offence then it will be passed onwards to the Grand Jury, which would decide if there was enough cause to proceed with a trial. If there was, the defendant was formally indicted and the case could proceed to the Old Bailey. If not, the defendant was released.

We must also remember that the Old Bailey is merely *one* of the courts that were operating in London during the early nineteenth century – though undoubtedly one of the most important. The Old Bailey, like all English courts, had a very specific mandate that focused on felonies and serious misdemeanors in

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<sup>42</sup> Sharon Howard, 'Investigating Responses to Theft in Early Modern Wales: Communities, Thieves and the Courts', *Continuity and Change*, 19 (2004), 409–430.

<sup>43</sup> J.A. Sharpe, 'Quantification and the History of Crime in Early Modern England: Problems and Results', *Historical Social Research*, 15 (1990), 19.

<sup>44</sup> Shoemaker, *Prosecution and Punishment*, 35.

Middlesex and the City.<sup>45</sup> This included only the part of the Metropolis north of the River Thames. Southwark, often referred to as the Borough, on the river's south bank had its own Quarter Session court, meaning crimes committed within view of the city did not necessarily find their way into the Old Bailey records. Other semi-urban regions nearby including Kingston-upon-Thames and Guildford in Surrey, similarly benefitted from their own Quarter Sessions, while the western edges of Essex were also beyond the Old Bailey's jurisdiction but within striking distance of the metropolis.<sup>46</sup>

England had a complex web of courts in the early nineteenth century, each with its own functions and physical jurisdictions. The Old Bailey was actually quite unique, as were many London institutions. Most courts in England were occasions rather than permanent fixtures. Each county had its own set of courts, which convened to dispense justice at semi-regular intervals. The most important of these were the Quarter Sessions – which naturally met four times per year – and the Assizes, which met twice. The Quarter Sessions dealt primarily with crimes such as assault, riot, larceny, fraud, embezzlement, as well as those without a specific victim, such as failing to show up for watchman duty. The Assizes tended to try more serious crimes, deemed capital offences, including treason, coinage, petty treason, homicide, infanticide, rape, robbery, burglary, larceny, and arson.

There were still other courts; by the nineteenth century many of these sat permanently at Westminster just to the west of the City. These included the King's Bench, which generally limited the criminal trials heard to those of riots and treason, as well as the court of Common Pleas and Court of Exchequer, which primarily heard civil cases and cases related to the King's purse, respectively.<sup>47</sup> The Court of Chancery and Equity received suits against the crown, as the King could not be sued in his own courts. There were also conciliar courts set up to deal explicitly with cases beyond English borders, most importantly the Court of

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<sup>45</sup> Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, 'Crime and Justice - Crimes Tried at the Old Bailey', *OBPO*.

<sup>46</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, 16.

<sup>47</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, 5-6, 19.

the Admiral, which oversaw issues that occurred on the high seas and was used frequently during the Napoleonic wars to oversee prize cases. Family law, such as divorce and wills, fell under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, adding another layer to an already complex web of jurisdictions.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, we must remember that the Old Bailey courthouse was an institution with a physical capacity. Until 1824, the building contained only a single courtroom, which naturally could only hear one trial at a time.<sup>49</sup> There was a level of selectiveness when it came to deciding which trials would be heard before the magistrates. During a period of relative calm, comparatively more minor crimes may have found their way into the schedule, whereas during periods of upheaval these may have been dealt with summarily before reaching the Old Bailey.

The *Old Bailey Proceedings* should not and cannot be considered a record of criminal activity in London. Rather, it is a record of trials heard in the Old Bailey courthouse. For a case to thus appear, a victim in Middlesex or the metropolis north of the river had to identify a culprit and decide to pursue official redress from the courts rather than a community-based resolution. He or she also had to decide to pursue the case in the Old Bailey, rather than the King's Bench or the Court of Common Pleas. Before it reached the Old Bailey, the victim had to convince a magistrate and the Grand Jury to endorse the case and send it to trial. This complicated process of bringing a case to the Old Bailey meant that a trial was incredibly unlikely. At each stage of the process something could occur that would prevent us as historians from having a record of the dispute.

Historians are not privy to all of the decisions that brought a trial to court. Instead, we only have the result. We must therefore be cautious and remember that what we have is a record of the defendants who were *indicted* for a certain class of felonious crime in a specific part of town, which is not the same thing as

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<sup>48</sup> J.H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, Fourth Edition [1971] (London, 2002), 101, 124, 132.

<sup>49</sup> Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, 'Historical Background - History of The Old Bailey Courthouse', *OBPO*.

the number of people who *committed* those crimes. Any claims we can make about criminality are therefore based on what represents a small fraction of criminal activity in London.

With this in mind, we can ask: for which types of crimes were Irish defendants who appeared in the Old Bailey courtroom being indicted? Returning to the case of Margaret Sullivan, recall that she experienced the most common path through the justice system: grand larceny → guilt → imprisonment. However, not everyone follows the most common path and the records do suggest many areas of criminal activity in which it seems the Irish were collectively criminally unique, or at least were indicted in patterns that were unique.

Based on a distant reading it would seem that Irish men were more likely to find themselves on trial for violent theft, murder, and currency offences, than non-Irish men. On the other hand, they were much less likely to be caught and charged with animal theft, burglary and house breaking, embezzlement, or even theft in general. We can use this information to draw conclusions about the types of crimes for which the Irish were indicted in the early nineteenth century. We might conclude for example that the Irish were not being hired to deliver the post, based on the discovery that only one Irish man was charged with mail theft over the course of twenty years.<sup>50</sup>

If we look at Irish women we see that they were more likely than non-Irish women to find themselves charged with shoplifting, pocket picking, and currency-related offences, especially during the first decade of the century. We could use this information to claim that Irish women were over-represented in these activities. That conclusion may in fact be true. I imagine that it *is* true of a particular set of Irish women. What I do not think we can say is that the Irish women were *more* involved than non-Irish women in shoplifting or pocket picking or currency crime, because in some cases these conclusions are not based on very much evidence. In 1804 for example, Irish women comprised one third of all women charged with pocket picking, which immediately jumps out as intriguing. However, only three women faced the charge that year. The problem

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<sup>50</sup> 'September 1810, trial of George Curran (t18100919-59)', *OBPO*.



looks much smaller and any conclusion based upon this dataset would, I imagine, make most statisticians shake their heads sadly.

Because there are 56 categories of crime in the *Old Bailey Online* XML schema, and twenty years' worth of criminal activity, the number of people appearing in each crime category can become very small very quickly, except for the most common crimes. This is particularly an issue with females who comprised only one quarter of all defendants and of whom only 538 were identified as Irish in the previous chapter. To put that in perspective, we are looking at an average of one Irish female defendant appearing in the Old Bailey each fortnight. A handful of individuals can thus skew wider trends very easily, and we must be careful with any claims we seek to make, particularly about the specifics of female crime.

That is not to say that I do not think we can make any conclusions about the types of crimes for which we have evidence of Irish individuals committing. Not all evidence needs to be 'statistically significant' from a statistician's perspective to be useful for reaching historical conclusions. These observational claims about what types of crime in which it *seems* the Irish were heavily involved are useful and can push forward discussions on the topic. Nevertheless, we as historians must be wary of any claims made by our colleagues that do not put the size of the sample in context or who merely present a percentage with no mention of how it was derived.

These observational claims can give us a sense of what the Irish community was up to in terms of criminality. Unfortunately, we do not have the level of granularity in our data to make claims that the Irish were *X* per cent more likely to do this or *Y* per cent less likely to receive that. We can however suggest that they were more active at certain times of year, or overrepresented amongst certain crime categories, or perhaps not seemingly involved in other classes of crime. That too is a valuable insight into their communities and not something we should shy away from. Nevertheless, our sources have limits and it is up to us not to exceed them.

## ***Trend 1: Offences Against the Currency***

Currency offences are a good example of how we can see the impact of the limitations described above and how they may have skewed our understanding of criminal patterns. The distant reading above singled out the Irish as over-represented in coining-related offences. Both contemporary Patrick Colquhoun and historian Peter King agree with this conclusion.<sup>51</sup> This means we have both a contemporary impression of Irish involvement in coining and two historian's interpretations that corroborate the same.

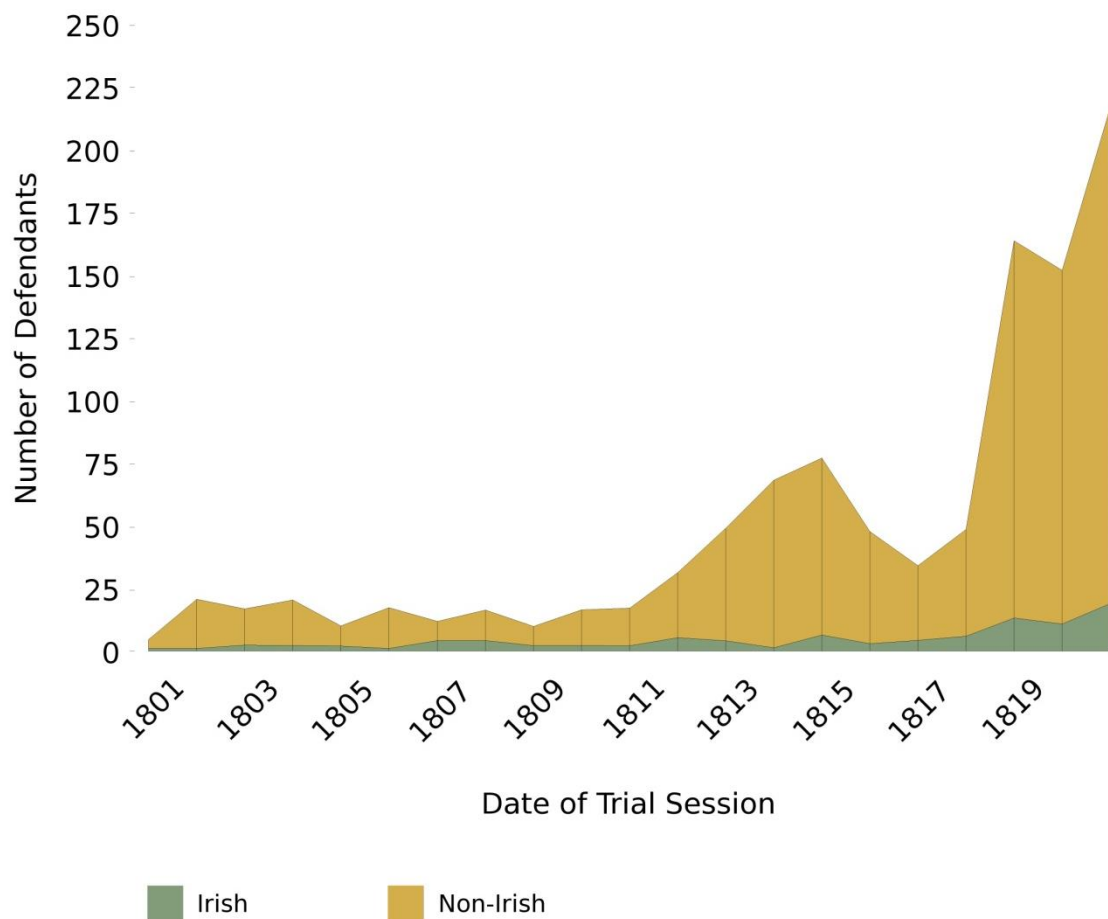
King's conclusions were based upon an analysis of the *Middlesex Criminal Registers* from 1791-1805, which certainly suggests that the Irish were heavily involved in this class of crime. By including the Irish defendants from my own analysis I can confirm that this trend in which a disproportionately high percentage of Irish defendants appeared on trial facing currency related charges continues until 1811.<sup>52</sup> In 1804 for example, Irish defendants were charged with thirty-six per cent of all currency-related offences, despite the fact that the size of the Irish in London comprised somewhere between two and ten per cent of the whole population.<sup>53</sup> This evidence could lead us to believe the Irish were plaguing the city with false money. However, the records post-1811 tell a completely different story as can be seen from Figure 5.1, which throws our confidence in my distant reading and King's analysis into doubt. After 1811 the number of coining cases shoots up, tripling in the first year, and increasing

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<sup>51</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 15.

<sup>52</sup> As my study directly used the XML tags created by the *Old Bailey Online* project, I have used their definition. 'This category includes a number of offences in which coin or paper money (the King's currency) was counterfeited or interfered with, or in which individuals used or possessed forged or diminished currency. These offences include the following: coining (counterfeiting coins); possessing moulds for the manufacture of coins; manufacturing counterfeit paper money, banknotes or bills of exchange; filing, milling, colouring or 'diminishing' coins (in order to use the filings to create more coins or to sell the metal); possessing counterfeit money or putting it in into circulation ('uttering')' Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, 'Crime and Justice - Crimes Tried at the Old Bailey', *OBPO*.

<sup>53</sup> *The Report of the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* estimates the size of the poor Irish born population at 6,876 adults and 7,288 children (14,164 total) – a count which notably omits those who were self-sufficient. Unfortunately more accurate counts are not available until 1841 when Lynn Hollen Lees estimates roughly 4 per cent of the London population were Irish born (excluding second-generation Irish). Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 50; *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* (1816), 7.



**Figure 5.1: Currency crime defendants.**

Number of defendants tried per year in the Old Bailey for currency-related offences.

twenty-one-fold in the next decade. In 1820 the Old Bailey tried 236 people for currency related offences – compared to eleven a decade and a half earlier.

Figure 5.1 represents a distant reading of currency related offences, focusing on the number of Irish and non-Irish defendants.

This seems to contradict the conclusions of my own distant reading, as well as the work of Peter King and Patrick Colquhoun, by suggesting that non-Irish defendants overwhelmingly committed currency-related offences. Having identified this trend through distant reading, the next chapter will look more closely at this problem to determine what (if anything) of significance this graph can elucidate about the Irish and crime in London and whether popular views at the time may in fact have been incorrect.

## ***Trend 2: Seasonality of Irish Crime***

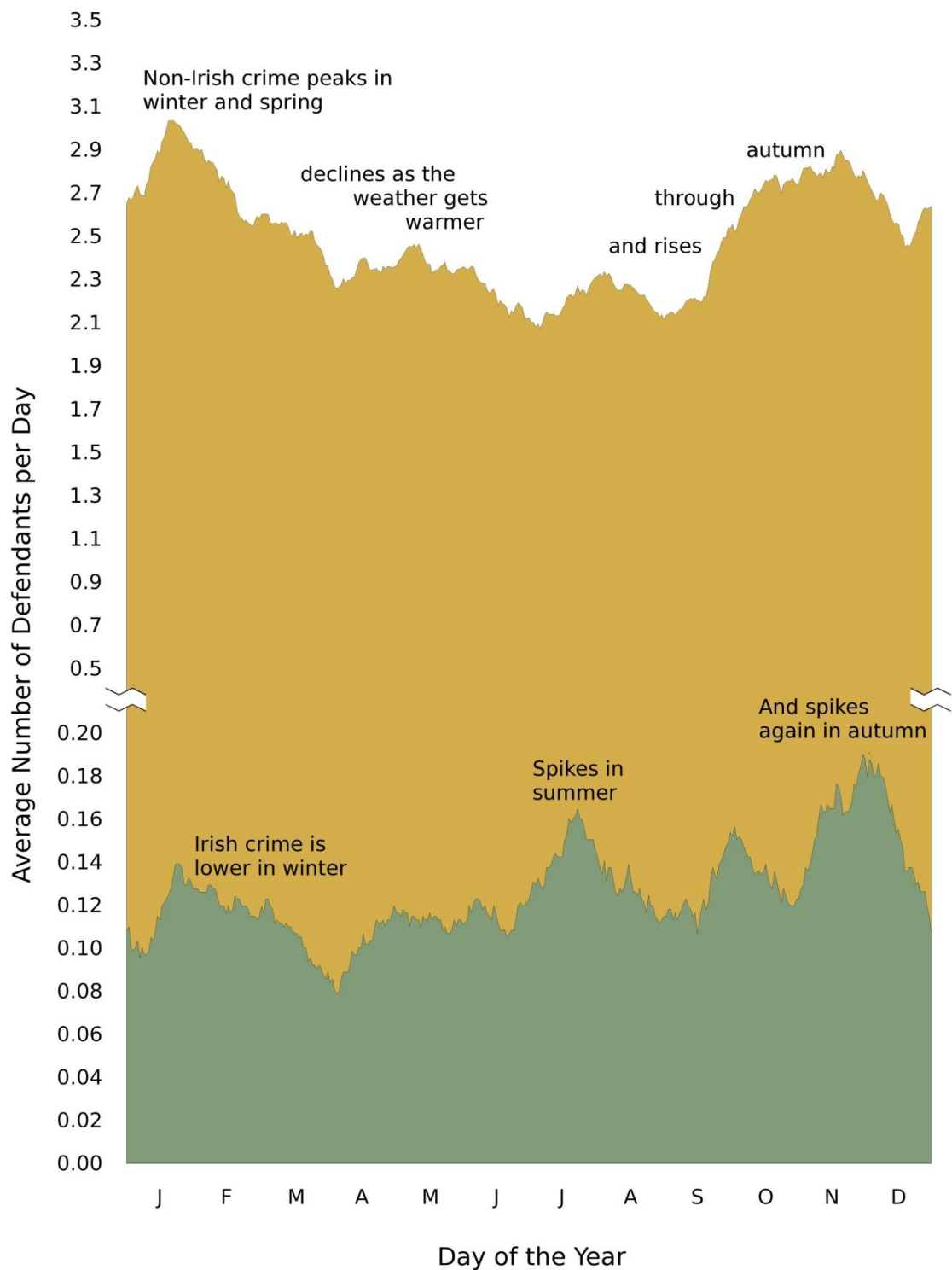
Shifts in the seasons always heavily influenced life in Britain. Everything from the foods people ate, the tasks that needed doing, and the ailments or diseases from which people were likely to die changed with the seasons.<sup>54</sup> Anyone who has ever experienced a winter in London knows that first and foremost it is dark. In contrast to near-seventeen hours of daylight in June, a day during the depths of a London winter sees less than eight, with the sun well and truly gone by four in the afternoon. This can be depressing enough in the twenty-first century; but in the pre-electric world of the early nineteenth century this darkness must have had a dramatic impact on life.

With darkness also comes the inevitable end of the agricultural season. That which has been harvested must be rationed and the time of plenty wanes into a time of wanting. Desperate times call for desperate measures and it is perhaps not surprising that felonious crime increased during the London winter, when life was most difficult. The total number of indicted felonies committed in January during the period was nearly one-quarter higher than those committed in July. The results of this trend amongst the three-quarters of defendants who were male, shows a clear decline in crime over the spring and summer and a sharp increase in autumn and winter, as can be seen in Figure 5.2.

These values represent a 31-day moving average. This means each point represents the average number of male defendants for the day itself but also the fifteen days preceding and following each day of the year. This was done to provide a more readable graph, as daily variation can be quite considerable, making it difficult to see broader trends. A daily value also seemed rather arbitrary, as over a twenty year period it introduces confounding variables such as weather, which could have kept would-be thieves indoors on certain days; day of the week, which influenced who was out shopping; phases of the moon, which modern hospital accident and emergency departments believe influence human

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<sup>54</sup> Anne Hardy, 'Diagnosis, Death, and Diet: The Case of London, 1750-1909', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18 (1988), 390.



**Figure 5.2: Seasonal prosecution rates.**

Number of male defendants tried in the Old Bailey from 1801-1820 by the month in which the crime occurred – graphed as a 31-day moving average.

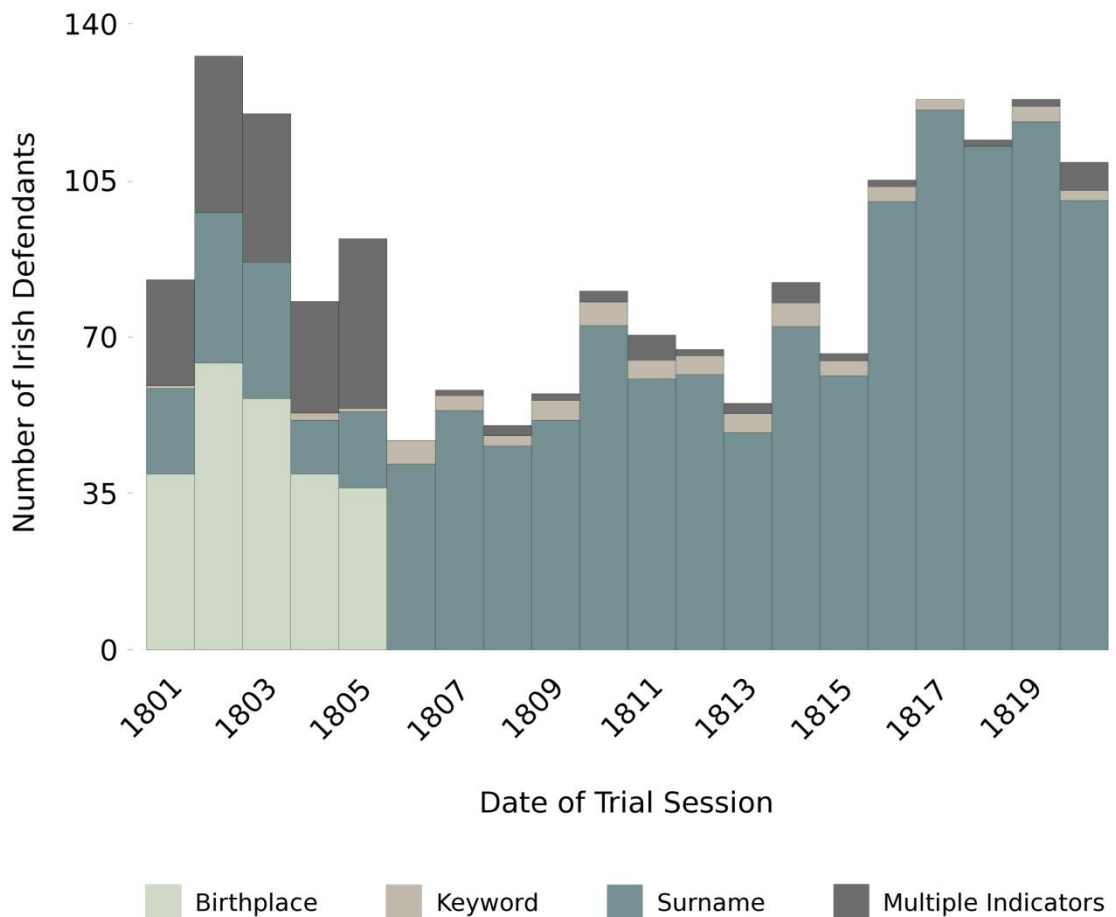
behaviour for the worse; even the date on which Easter falls each year, which was an important event in the Christian calendar. Rather than pretend there is a

reliable way to measure how crime was committed on April 1<sup>st</sup>, this graph considers what trends in crime resembled on and around April 1<sup>st</sup>.

We might expect the Irish, many of whom were poor and presumably had less experience in a harsh urban environment, to be particularly vulnerable to the London winter. We might forgive them for having to resort to some petty theft to keep themselves and their children fed during the long, dark, cold nights, whilst they awaited warmer days in the spring. But that is not what we see at all. Instead, we see a dramatic drop in Irish felonious crimes committed during the winter months. Felonious crime peaks in November before falling off in January and remaining quite low until the following June. This unexpected trend suggests an interesting seasonal relationship to conflicts amongst the Irish population in London that does not extend to the wider population. This is not something that would necessarily have become evident to a historian conducting a close reading.

### ***Trend 3: The Influence of External Events***

Finally, I examined the possible influence of external events that go beyond the personal conflicts played out on the streets of London. Throughout much of the early nineteenth century the United Kingdom was at war with France or the United States. The economy was mobilised for war, and many soldiers and sailors came in and out of London. This no doubt meant a boom in spending in industries such as food and drink and prostitution, but also meant new faces were introduced into communities, possibly providing opportunities for mischief and conflict. It also meant that when peace came there were thousands of soldiers and sailors out of work. We see the impact of this peace in Figure 5.3, which shows an increase in Irish crime from 1802-1803 during the brief Peace of Amiens. We see it again during the peace of 1814 and then again in 1816 when the indictment rate grows and remains high in the years following the battle of Waterloo and the end of the Napoleonic Wars. A closer look at these patterns across the years can shed light on what types of external events influenced the relationship between the Irish and Londoners during these years.



**Figure 5.3: Irish defendants per year.**

Irish defendants identified in the Old Bailey Proceedings, 1801-1820.



Distant reading is not intended as a means by which close reading can be made obsolete. Instead, it provides a way to productively direct a scholarly investigation into areas that the researcher might not otherwise have thought to investigate. In this case, my distant reading of the *Old Bailey Online* has identified three such areas that I would not have been able to discover through a close reading of the material.

The story I am able to tell through distant reading is different than the one facilitated by close reading. It is often less personal, and can at times risk appearing out of context. It also has its benefits. It allows us to analyse far more material than an unaided human ever could. We no longer need to sample the

past and risk overemphasising what was quotable rather than representative. It allows us see patterns across large numbers of sources that are otherwise just impossible to see through close reading.

But these patterns are not the end of the research process. They are the beginning. This distant reading is an invitation for another closer reading. At this stage I believe it is only through close reading that potential conclusions can be thoroughly interrogated and rigorously tested. The next three chapters will describe how I undertook that close reading to determine if the distant reading, based on the use of the surname analysis tool, has in fact pointed my research to useful places, or if it has sent me looking down a rabbit hole.



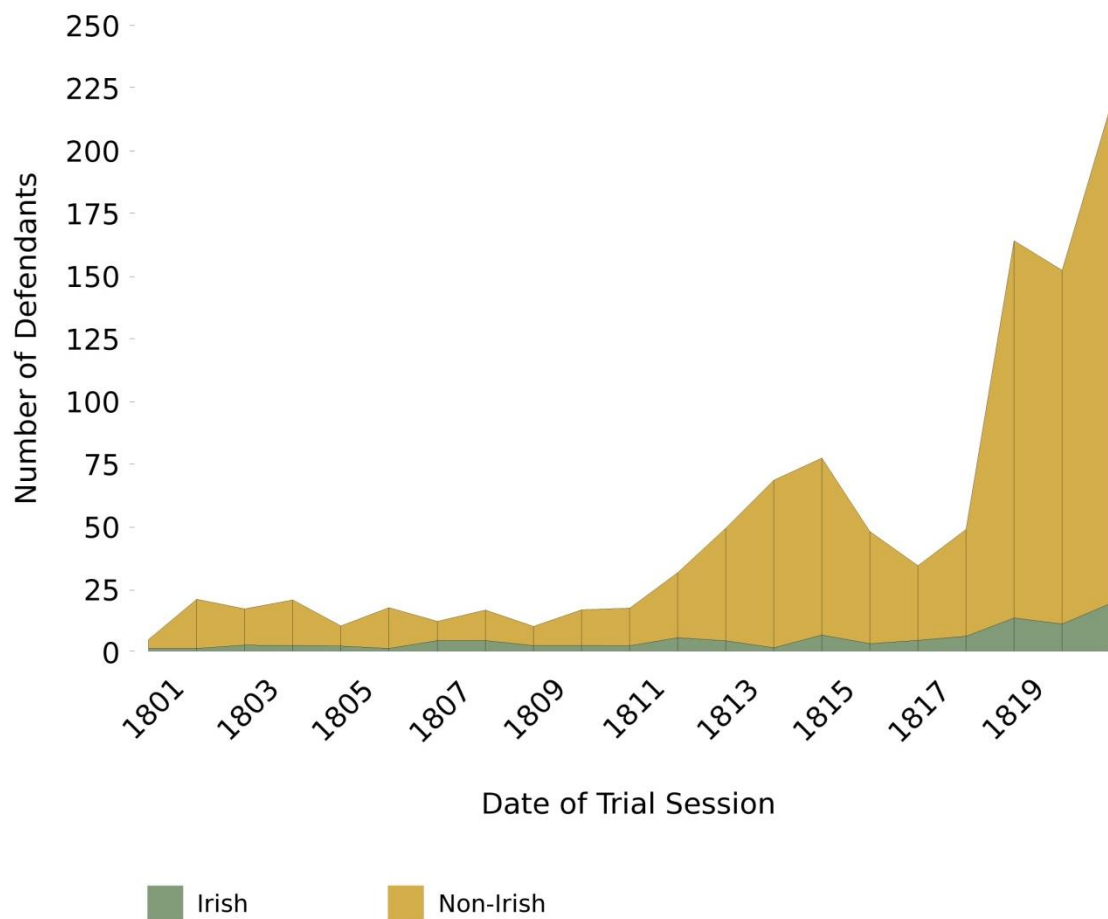
## 6. The Decision to Prosecute

Two men walk into different pubs on the same day in early nineteenth-century London. Both men buy a glass of gin and offer a counterfeit silver 3-shilling coin as payment to the publican's wife, who is tending the bar. They both know they have committed a crime and wait nervously to find out if she will be fooled. The publican's wife looks at the coin suspiciously and turns it round carefully in her hand. It feels a bit light, she thinks. She rings it on the countertop and knows immediately the sound that resonates is not right. Her expression turns cold and she glares at the man. *This is a bad one; what do you take me for, a fool?* The first man is Irish. The second man is not. Do they both go to trial?

Behind this rhetorical scenario is a historiographical question: were the Irish systematically singled out for harsher justice for committing the same type of crime? The records of early nineteenth century currency crime provide a unique way of exploring that issue in further detail. As mentioned in the previous chapter, both Peter King, and contemporary Patrick Colquhoun, believed that the Irish were over-represented amongst the perpetrators of currency crime. King estimated that the Irish were responsible for twenty-eight per cent of such crimes between 1791 and 1805, which was well above what one would expect given the estimated size of the Irish population.<sup>1</sup> However, my distant reading of Irish currency crime between 1801 and 1820, as seen visually represented in Figure 6.1, suggests that King's conclusions do not tell the whole story and that his timeframe (1791-1805) may be to blame for that oversight. This new evidence, built with a new mode of identifying a larger subset of the Irish defendants, and which represents a distant reading of those tried for currency related crime, suggests that a significant change occurred in prosecution patterns in the second decade of the nineteenth century. This change appears to throw the Irish into a kinder light, as they subsequently form a much smaller proportion of defendants per year. This graph opens up new questions about discretionary justice as it relates to the Irish, building on another element

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<sup>1</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 15.



**Figure 6.1: Currency crime defendants.**

Number of defendants tried per year in the Old Bailey for currency-related offences.

of King's work that explores the decisions made by victims to pursue or avoid the courts.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will explore in greater detail the phenomenon displayed in Figure 6.1, which suggests that either the Irish were more likely to be *prosecuted* for this type of crime prior to 1811, or the non-Irish began *committing* considerably more currency-related crime after 1811. This test of my distant reading will seek to determine which, if either of these explanations is true, and to explore the advantages and limits of this distant reading approach for historians of crime looking for patterns in the surviving record that are invisible to those conducting close reading alone.

<sup>2</sup> Peter King, *Crime, Justice, and Discretion in England 1740-1820* (Oxford, 2000); King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 390-414.

## ***Currency Crime and Discretionary Justice***

In the early nineteenth century, for most classes of crime, the victim was almost solely responsible for initiating legal proceedings. That is in large part because at that time London had no official police force to instigate lawsuits on behalf of the people. That is not to suggest there was no one keeping an eye on the place; Andrew T. Harris showed that the presence of people hired to mind the city prior to 1829 was significant and had been for some time.<sup>3</sup> London area parishes had engaged night watchmen since the seventeenth century and day watchmen since 1737, offering at least sporadic protection. John Beattie outlined the role of the 'Bow Street Runners' in apprehending criminals since 1750.<sup>4</sup> By the turn of the nineteenth century, the watch described by Harris had expanded to include a group of sixty patrolmen on foot that kept watch during the night, and by 1815, a horse patrol was on guard along London's main roads.<sup>5</sup> However, it was not until the 1829 *Metropolitan Police Act* that publicly funded officers fulfilled the role we expect of constables. In the absence of an official police system, much of the pressure to prosecute fell onto the shoulders of the victim. The victim may have had assistance and even advice from professionals, such as local officers or watchmen, but the decision to proceed was usually one for the victims alone to make.

The victim's role in prosecutions is often overlooked. For felonious crimes, the justice system had many stages (see Figure 6.2) only the last of which left a reliable paper trail upon which historians can base analyses.<sup>6</sup> For a case to reach trial, the victim had to take a series of conscious steps. They had to realise they had been victimised in the first place – not always obvious if robbed by a skilled pick pocket, for example. Next, the victim had to identify who had committed the crime and then find that person – difficult if the culprit had not been caught in the act. Then, they had to go to a justice of the peace to get a warrant for

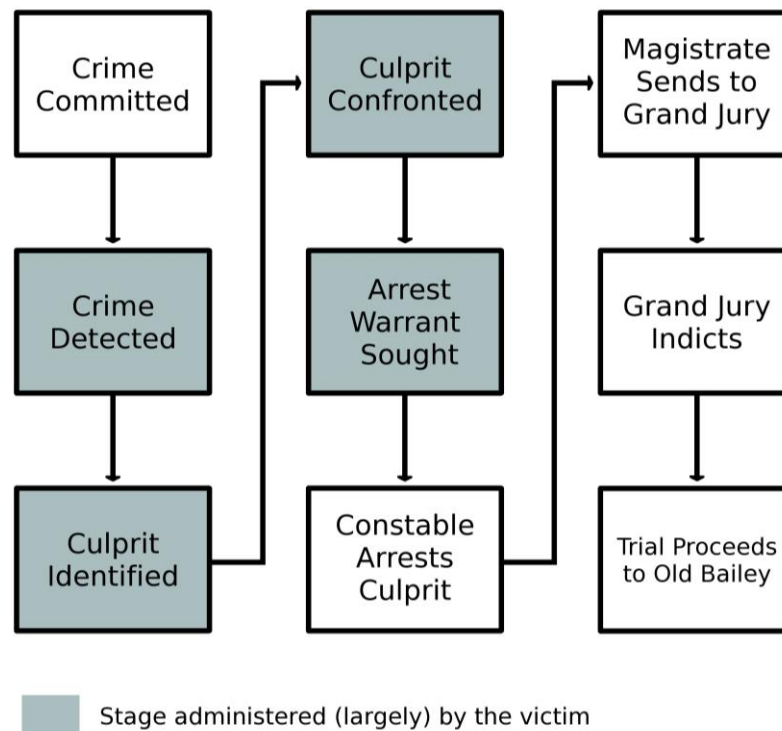
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<sup>3</sup> Andrew T. Harris, 'Policing and Public Order in the City of London, 1784-1815', *The London Journal*, 28 (2003), 1–20.

<sup>4</sup> J.M. Beattie, *The First English Detectives: The Bow Street Runners and the Policing of London, 1750-1840* (Oxford, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> David Bentley, *English Criminal Justice in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1998), 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> Sharpe, 'Quantification', 19.



**Figure 6.2: Stages of justice.**

The stages of the criminal justice system in London for felonious crimes.

arrest, which would be carried out by a constable. Particularly in those crimes that occurred in shops (such as currency crime and shoplifting), the shopkeeper also had to pluck up the courage to confront the person and prevent them from getting away, being mindful of the potential danger of doing so, so that the warrant could be obtained. The decision to pursue the King's justice through the courts was but one of a countless number of available conflict resolution strategies and one that came with expense, inconvenience, and uncertainty.

Justice is not free. Economic circumstances have always shaped the decisions of those seeking justice. Someone had to draw up the formal indictment to be laid before the Grand Jury, which was best left to a solicitor at the cost of a few shillings. For most victims, on the day of the trial one had to do far more than merely show up, which was trouble enough for a shopkeeper who had to be away from his or her business. For those who could not afford a lawyer to deliver the case, prosecution meant standing up and convincing the jury that the accused had committed a crime against them. For most victims, standing in front of the

court happened only once in their lifetime; no other experience was likely to prepare them for the gravity of the situation they had brought upon themselves. With the defendant's life often on the line, and without the requisite specialist knowledge of both criminal law and courtroom procedure, the task was undoubtedly too much for many victims to follow through. Instead, most serious conflicts – even those that should have been tried as felonies – were likely resolved quietly.<sup>7</sup> As John Beattie suggests:

In the small-scale society of the village a prosecution may not have been the most effective way to deal with petty violence and theft. Demanding an apology and a promise not to repeat the offence, perhaps with some monetary or other satisfaction, may have been a more natural as well as a more effective response to such an offence, or perhaps simple revenge, directly taken.<sup>8</sup>

Even within a larger environment such as London, settling the matter locally often achieved the goals of the victim, who in many cases only wanted to ensure they were not left with a loss, without the added bother and disruption to community harmony of an official process. But what if the culprit was Irish? Did that increase the likelihood of an unsympathetic response?

We know from Peter Linebaugh's study of eighteenth century condemned criminals, which includes a chapter 'If you plead for your life, plead in Irish', that Irishness may have been an advantage for some accused criminals.<sup>9</sup> It certainly was for James Butler, an Irishman who was allowed to plead guilty to a lesser offence thanks to a letter of support from a former employer who characterised Butler as an uneducated drunk Irishman – apparently that was enough to justify mercy from that particular prosecutor.<sup>10</sup>

Peter King's study of ethnicity and justice argued that once the trial began, the Irish were not systematically disadvantaged. That is, they were likely to receive

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<sup>7</sup> Legally, victims could not accept compensation from an accused in exchange for dropping a prosecution. This was known as 'compounding a felony' and was itself a misdemeanour. However, like with any crime, this had to be detected and prosecuted.

<sup>8</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 288.

<sup>10</sup> 'The Committee for Law Suits'. *The Bank of England Archives*. (M5/318, 6 March 1817), 170.

the same verdict and treatment as anyone accused of a similar crime.<sup>11</sup> However, both Linebaugh and King were using evidence from the end of the justice system: that of the trial itself. The records that have survived as part of the *Old Bailey Proceedings* represent only those that reached the trial phase. We have scant evidence of the circumstances under which victims pursued the King's justice, versus those under which they instead dealt with the matter as they saw fit. This period also lacks surviving notebooks from justices of the peace that could shed light on the thoughts of the magistrates, who played an important role in the judicial process. Some of these notebooks exist for the eighteenth century, notably Henry Norris for the 1730s, Dudley Ryder in the 1740s and 50s, and Lord Mansfield in the later eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Within Norris' notebook, the Irish are conspicuously absent, leaving us blind to magisterial attitudes towards the group.

This lack of recorded evidence makes it difficult to determine if any anti-Irish bias was at play in the earliest stages of detection and prosecution, or if the Irish criminal was more likely to stand trial than the non-Irish criminal for the same crime. This chapter explores whether or not the privately initiated prosecution system put the Irish at a disadvantage by leaving open the door for anti-Irishness to play a role in the decision of a victim to prosecute. To get at the heart of this matter, we need to gain an understanding of how prosecutions initiated privately by victims compared to prosecutions initiated by the increasingly important network of professionals acting on behalf of a third party. Did private victims prosecute the Irish in different patterns than did professional officers? These two types of prosecutors had different emotional attachments to the outcome of the trial, with the latter focused on the strength of evidence and the likelihood of guilt, whereas the former had a clear emotional attachment to the outcome. This distinction has important implications for identifying a perceived anti-Irish bias at the point of prosecution.

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<sup>11</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 390–414.

<sup>12</sup> With thanks to Louise Falcini. *Justice in Eighteenth-Century Hackney the Justicing Notebook of Henry Norris and the Hackney Petty Sessions Book*, ed. Ruth Paley (London Record Society, xxviii, 1991), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol28>.

For professional lawyers and thief takers, justice was rarely personal; they were after money, not revenge. For lawyers, the goal was repeat business, garnered through a reputation for successful prosecutions. As legal bills could quickly grow, this meant criminals that were what one might call 'low hanging fruit' (clearly guilty and susceptible to a quick trial) were naturally more attractive to legal clients who may not have wanted to risk a mounting bill. This was also true for thief takers who made much of their money from rewards given only for successful convictions. A thief taker who wasted his time on difficult cases simply earned less money.

For victims it was not necessarily about money. Victims were naturally emotionally invested in the cases in which they were involved. Because victims were rarely experienced with the law, their decisions to prosecute were heavily based on how the experience of victimisation had made them *feel* rather than necessarily on the strength of the evidence. Our record of who was prosecuted for crimes such as shoplifting and pocket picking are therefore coloured heavily by the series of decisions that victims had to make about the incident, tinted further by the hue of their rage or opinion of the culprit. For a victim, the goal was justice, or revenge. If anti-Irishness was coming into play over the decision to prosecute, it was likely with these private victims, acting on emotion rather than on evidence where we would expect to find it.

Trials initiated by victims are fairly easy to uncover if one looks for the types of crimes that tended to involve an immediate confrontation. Shoplifting and pocket picking are good such examples. Unlike burglary or murder cases, in which the culprit may have initially been unknown, shoplifters and pick pockets were usually caught red handed, or very nearly so. Margaret Walsh, for example, was caught in the act of stealing some flannel at the shop of a widow in 1816 and was immediately confronted by the widow's son.<sup>13</sup> The brief time between victimisation and the decision to prosecute meant either the victim was following an in-house policy on crime prevention, or was acting based on his or

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<sup>13</sup> 'July 1816, trial of Margaret Walsh (t18160710-13)', *OBPO*.

her attitude towards the culprit and the circumstances of the conflict.<sup>14</sup>

Shoplifting and pocket picking were classes of crime that saw above-average rates of Irish defendants, at 7.5 per cent and 6.2 per cent of defendants respectively, compared to 5.9 per cent across all crime categories.<sup>15</sup>

That is not enough evidence to suggest private victims were targeting Irish culprits for legal proceedings. The Irish may have been proportionately more involved in shoplifting and pocket picking in London, which would explain the differences. The degree of known Irish poverty and the need to 'make shift' certainly makes that a plausible conclusion. Because we do not know which culprits got away, we can only say that it would appear the Irish were either getting caught committing more shoplifting and pocket picking offences than a typical Londoner, or they were more likely to be prosecuted for committing those crimes. Unfortunately, the surviving evidence in shoplifting and pocket picking cases just do not provide enough detail to determine which of those conclusions is correct.

To get a better understanding of the relationship between prosecutions and crime rates we must turn to another class of crime: currency crime. Currency crime involved a number of distinct activities, ranging from producing false coins or bank notes (in both cases a multi-staged process often completed by different specialists), to selling counterfeit money, to uttering (the practice of offering counterfeit money purporting it to be good). Contemporaries regarded currency crime as particularly heinous, as it often involved looking the victim in the eye as the fraud took place. Left unchecked, currency crime threatened to undermine the very instruments of trade upon which the country depended. In 1797 Patrick Colquhoun reported 120 sellers of false coin in London alone, each potentially distributing thousands of coins onto the streets and into the pockets of the nation. Remarking on the profitability of the business, in 1800 Colquhoun said:

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<sup>14</sup> For more, see Daniel J.I. Murphy, *Customers and Thieves: An Ethnography of Shoplifting* (Aldershot, 1986), 85-98; D.P. Walsh, *Shoplifting: Controlling a major crime* (London, 1978).

<sup>15</sup> Shoplifting: 64/852 defendants were Irish. Pocket picking: 132/2135.



The base money is no sooner finished, than it is packed up and sent to customers in town and country; and with such rapidity has it been fabricated, on occasions of pressing emergency, that a single dealer has been known to procure from the coiners who worked for him, from £300 to £500 for country orders, in the course of the week!<sup>16</sup>

Like shoplifting and pocket picking, currency crime too seemingly involved a private victim and an immediate confrontation, and was a class of crime for which the Irish were well known. Between 1801 and 1820 at least 1,776 individuals in the London area were tried for, or were suspected of involvement in currency crime. Of these, 247 (13.9 per cent) were Irish.<sup>17</sup> During the early nineteenth century the Irish were known in particular for producing and uttering false coins.<sup>18</sup> As mentioned above, Peter King calculated that twenty-eight per cent of London's coining and uttering cases between 1791 and 1805 involved Irish defendants.<sup>19</sup> Colquhoun corroborates King's findings, painting a damning picture of the Irish as well as the Jews:

The lower ranks among the Irish, and the German Jews, are the chief supporters of the trade of circulating base money in London;—there is said to be scarce an Irish labourer who does not exchange his week's wages for base money; taking a mixture of shillings, sixpences, and copper...Irish women are the chief utterers and colourers of base silver. A vast number of these low females have acquired the mischievous art of colouring the bad shillings and sixpences.<sup>20</sup>

The extent of Irish involvement in bank note crime has been dramatically underestimated, despite contemporary evidence. Bank notes were a new invention (for the English) at the turn of the nineteenth century. They were brought about in response to a shortage in coins in the 1790s, caused by people illegally exporting and selling English money in Europe where its metallic content fetched a profit in excess of its face value. Therefore, in April 1793, the Bank of England

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<sup>16</sup> Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*.

<sup>17</sup> Depending on who you ask the size of the Irish population in London at the time was anywhere from three per cent to ten per cent. Whatever the case the Irish do appear to be over-represented in currency crime based on this evidence. For more on Irish population in London in the early nineteenth century see Sheppard, *The Infernal Wen*, 5–6; Swift, *The Irish In Britain*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*, 172.

<sup>19</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 15.

<sup>20</sup> Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*, 189–190.

introduced £5 paper bank notes, making them suitable for middle-class trade.<sup>21</sup> From 1797 smaller denominations of £1 and £2 were also issued.<sup>22</sup> One might suggest that the Irish were too poor to handle denominations of £1 and £2 and were thus inconsequential in this class of crime. Deirdre Palk argued that those involved in currency crime were typically not at the bottom of the social heap or 'low females' as Colquhoun calls them. Instead, Palk contends they were of a slightly better off sort than those caught shoplifting or pocket picking, for example.<sup>23</sup> Counterfeiting and uttering was a labouring-class and middling-sort activity; it was quite profitable, so if you did not get caught, you could increase your living conditions quickly. Mention of Irish bank note crime is conspicuously absent from Peter King's article that pegged twenty-eight per cent of coin crime on the group. Colquhoun's observations also fail to mention the Irish when it came to bank note crime. Yet an 1804 letter to *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* from a man initialed R.S. in Dublin noted that 'within the last seven years more persons have been hanged and transported for imitating Irish bank notes than for counterfeiting coin since the creation of the world'.<sup>24</sup> The Irish certainly were involved in the crime at home, and we would be foolish to assume that habit ceased when they arrived in London.

Despite the tendency for Irish poverty, contemporary evidence shows the group did routinely have access to these notes. Small denomination notes – the type frequently involved in forgery and uttering cases – were not beyond the reach of the labouring poor. Weekly or monthly wages could be and in many cases were paid in notes.<sup>25</sup> Given the shortage of coin, as well as the fact that London was home to the Bank of England where notes could be obtained and exchanged, they proved an excellent payroll solution for employers. And the Irish were not beyond these types of jobs. Jeremiah Nowland, a bricklayer's labourer, was charged in 1811 with uttering a forged £1 note. Nowland claimed to have received the note from his employer as his weekly wages, which was confirmed

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<sup>21</sup> John Clapham, *The Bank of England a History: 1694-1797*, Volume 1 (Cambridge, 1944), 262.

<sup>22</sup> W. Marston Acres, *The Bank of England from Within: 1694-1900*, Volume 1 (London, 1931), 322.

<sup>23</sup> Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, 89.

<sup>24</sup> R.S. 'Irish Currency', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 28 April 1804, Issue 17, BL Newspapers, II.

<sup>25</sup> Clapham, *The Bank of England a History*, 3.

by the court (though the employer would not admit that the forged note was the same as the one with which he had paid his worker).<sup>26</sup> Bricklayer's labourers were by no means the lowest paid employees in the metropolis, but they were hardly rising members of the middling sort. Surviving trial accounts suggest merchants accepted notes cautiously, but that they were not seen as out of the ordinary, even for minor purchases such as a small quantity of tea or a glass of gin.

Cases involving Irish forgers tried for creating and selling false bank notes are also not uncommon. By far the most detailed account related to currency crime in the *Old Bailey Proceedings* involved the 1802 case of a condemned Irish forger named John Fennell. In exchange for his own life, Fennell's accomplice, an upholsterer named James Gillington, gave damning testimony at Fennell's trial. Since arriving in London in 1799 Gillington admitted the pair had forged upwards of 600 notes with a homemade press constructed by the prisoner's brother: a carpenter.<sup>27</sup> Though all three men were Irish, none were what we might call desperately poor; instead, they were skilled tradesmen who saw an opportunity for personal gain. This activity was what Peter Linebaugh and Malcolm Gaskill have described as a means of compensating for the inadequate wages and frequent unemployment that often accompanied life in London.<sup>28</sup> At least one contemporary saw it as an impulsive act of the youth who wanted to 'relieve some temporary embarrassment, the extravagances of their age, or the necessity of appearing genteel upon a trifling salary'.<sup>29</sup> The link between the Irish and all forms of currency crime is therefore firmly established, though the evidence does suggest a greater involvement in coin-related offences. We might therefore assume the Irish were involved in bank note crime in roughly the same proportions as a typical Londoner of the same ilk.

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<sup>26</sup> 'September 1811, trial of Jeremiah Nowland (t18110918-66)', *OBPO*.

<sup>27</sup> 'April 1802, trial of John Fennell (t18020428-50)', *OBPO*.

<sup>28</sup> Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), 137.

<sup>29</sup> G.W. 'Forgery and Coining', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, October 18, 1806, Issue 16, BL Newspapers, II.

Compared to shoplifting and pocket picking, currency crime may seem very similar, particularly when one considers the relationship between the culprit and the victim. Uttering cases especially involved a victim who was faced with an immediate confrontation during which he or she had to decide what course of action to take. However, unlike shoplifting and pocket picking cases, currency crimes involved an invisible third-party victim: either the Bank of England, or the Royal Mint. An offender who offered a false coin or bank note to a barmaid had every intention of defrauding the merchant, who would be unable to pass the money onwards without herself committing a crime; however, it was the Bank and the Mint that had underwritten the value of the currency by promising to exchange the money for its posted value in gold. That meant that the barmaid was witness to the crime, but it was the Bank and the Mint who had the prerogative to prosecute for what amounted to attempted fraud of as little as a shilling or two. Which of these institutions led the prosecution depended on the coin or the note in question. The Bank of England was responsible for Bank of England paper notes or Bank tokens, such as the 3-shilling piece mentioned in the opening scenario. For cases involving the other coins of the realm, the solicitors of His Majesty's Royal Mint took charge.

These two institutions operated very differently than did private victims. Both the Bank and the Mint had at their disposal a large team of professionals who worked to put an end to currency crime. None of these professionals, be they lawyers, officers, or the directors of the Bank and Mint had any reason to feel personally victimised by these crimes. Instead they had a professional duty that was emotionally distant from the feeling of fraud. The Bank in particular became increasingly efficient at apprehending and prosecuting offenders, led by the 'Committee for Lawsuits', which met fortnightly to receive reports from the solicitors on offenders who had been drawn to their attention. The committee would then make a decision on which cases to pursue based on the evidence and advice of their team of lawyers. The records of the Committee for Lawsuits at the Bank and its counterpart at the Mint mean we have a wealth of information of not only who the Bank prosecuted, but who they considered prosecuting. We can

see into that process at the early stages of the justice system that are so often invisible in cases such as shoplifting and pocket picking.

Compared to the system of private prosecution in shoplifting and pocket picking, anyone accused of currency crime risked invoking the immediate and crushing weight of two of his Majesty's most professional institutions, with deep pockets for pursuing anyone involved in this class of crime for which the evidence was strong enough to warrant a conviction. Deirdre Palk describes, 'a complex network of police and other public officers, together with Bank-appointed and paid investigators' aided by 'informers and a well-informed constituency of traders and shopkeepers who knew what to do if "bad" notes were passed off to them', which turned the Bank in particular into a prosecuting machine.<sup>30</sup>

However, that machine took time to develop, and was not operating at full tilt until a series of events triggered what would become known as the 'Restriction Period'. This period in the Bank's history lasted for more than two decades, between 1797 and 1821, during which the public's right to exchange money for gold was withdrawn.<sup>31</sup> This came about because excessive government wartime borrowing and a struggling economy put the Bank of England's reserves to the test. Early in 1797 word of a possible French invasion began to circulate and the public panicked and withdrew mountains of gold. Faced with a crisis, on 27 February of that year the Bank posted an 'Order in Council' on their doors forbidding cash payments until further notice.<sup>32</sup> This was followed almost immediately by an act restricting the payment of gold from the Bank of England, effectively ending the security against paper money.<sup>33</sup>

This lack of security made people nervous. Not only because paper money was new and untested, but because counterfeiting was on the rise. Could they trust the money they were offered on a daily basis, or would they be left holding a

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<sup>30</sup> Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, 91.

<sup>31</sup> The restriction on cash payments was in force from 23 February 1797 until May of 1821. Henry Adams, 'The Bank of England Restriction', in *Chapters of Erie, and Other Essays* (Boston, 1871), 225.

<sup>32</sup> Adams, 'The Bank of England Restriction', 230.

<sup>33</sup> *The Bank Restriction Act* (37 Geo. III, c. 45, 1797).

worthless fake? Randall McGowan observed these new notes were ‘scarcely more than a printed form with a number, a date and a clerk’s signature’ and left people little reason to feel protected.<sup>34</sup> The Bank’s initial strategy for boosting confidence was technological rather than legislative. If the notes were not good enough, they would make them better. Between 1801 and 1817 the bank received suggestions from more than two hundred people who offered ideas on how to make notes more difficult to forge. These helpful suggestions for technological improvement and even samples came from a wide array of men, ranging from the famous philosopher Jeremy Bentham to a man named Mr. Ransom whose ‘letter was written so incoherently and his suggestions were considered of so little importance that his engraving &c were immediately returned to him’.<sup>35</sup> These ideas included suggestions of making notes from calfskins, or from silk, or even something as simple as ‘the Person employed to sign Bank Notes, should write in a good hand’.<sup>36</sup> Most people received a polite letter thanking them for their idea; however, some ideas were adopted. Watermarking was incorporated into the papermaking process, making the paper itself more difficult to forge.<sup>37</sup> A few years later, Joseph Bramah invented a machine that printed the numbers and dates on the bills, replacing the hand-written numbering that was thought too easy to forge. This involved a new set of bank plates which altered the design of the notes slightly, meaning the criminals had to scramble to keep up.

Not everyone was sympathetic to the technical challenges faced by the Bank to create notes that were difficult to forge. In a letter to *The Times* newspaper in 1820, an anonymous contributor complained:

I observe that Sarah Price, John Newman, John Madden, and Henry Harris, four fellow-subjects, are ordered for execution on Tuesday next, for the uttering of forged Bank-notes. What can sanction this sacrifice of human

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<sup>34</sup> Randall McGowan, ‘The Bank of England and the Policing of Forgery’, *Past & Present*, 186 (2005), 85–86.

<sup>35</sup> *Improvements of Bank Notes, Suggestions Considered 1797-1829*. Bank of England Archives (M5/253), 49.

<sup>36</sup> *Improvement of Bank Note, Suggestions Considered 1797-1818*. Bank of England Archives (M5/250), in particular pp. 17, 20, 129.

<sup>37</sup> Acres, *The Bank of England from Within*, 324–325.

life for the support of an admitted defective paper currency, which the public have proved before select commissions, and before repeated juries, to be so open to forgery that the greatest bunglers at engraving can easily imitate and counterfeit the notes? What are the Bank Directors doing, to allow month after month, nay, year after year, to pass away, without introducing an efficient paper currency, which should require the combined talents of the most eminent artists, aided by expensive machinery and a very large capital, to counterfeit?<sup>38</sup>

The pace of counterfeiting and forging became rampant as criminals took full advantage of the nation's new reliance on paper money. Between 1801 and 1820, more than a quarter million forged notes successfully found their way into circulation, nearly all of which were valued at either £1 or £2.<sup>39</sup> Spread out evenly across the period, that worked out to roughly thirty-five forged notes per day. But the notes were not spread evenly; instead the rate of forgery gathered pace and by 1820 there were on average eighty-three appearing at the Bank's door every single day. These quarter million notes were the ones that had been good enough to fool someone, but were not so good that they went undetected by the Bank's keen eye. Unknown numbers of others were turned away by merchants and thus avoided making their way into the official counts, and some may even have been accepted by the Bank as true notes, just as their makers had intended. By 1800 the Bank's directors reported that one in every 700 notes received was a forgery.<sup>40</sup> Across the whole of the Restriction Period, this rose by perhaps twice as much to roughly one in 400 notes in circulation.<sup>41</sup> The endemic rise in currency crime put increasing pressure, particularly on the Bank and Mint to stamp out the growing problem, resulting in each institution adopting a very different prosecution strategy.

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<sup>38</sup> MERCY, 'Forged Bank-Notes And The Gallows'. *The Times* [London, England] 4 Dec. 1820: 3. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>39</sup> 'Number of Forged Notes Brought to the Bank. Statistics of Those Prosecuted and Convicted, 1797-1834.' *The Bank of England Archives* (F2/122).

<sup>40</sup> Acres, *The Bank of England from Within*, 322.

<sup>41</sup> Based on data from Randall McGowan's table, 'Account of bank notes (under £5) in circulation, the number of forged notes returned to the bank, and prosecutions for forgery 1797-1824.' In 'The Bank of England and the Policing of Forgery, 87. The total value of £1 and £2 notes in circulation between 1801 and 1820 was £124,648,630. The total number of forged notes under £5 was 240,783. If each of those notes was worth £1 then the proportion of forged notes amongst all notes was  $240,783 / 124,648,630 * 100 = 0.19$  per cent. If each of those forged notes was worth £2 then the proportion of forged notes amongst was  $481,566 / 124,648,630 = 0.38$  per cent. The real value is undoubtedly in between the low of 0.19 per cent (one in 525) and the high of 0.38 per cent (one in 260).

## ***The Royal Mint***

The Mint's prosecution patterns are difficult to monitor in the London area. The Mint's solicitors kept records of cases tried as well as accused pursued but not prosecuted, as a way of itemising bills for legal services rendered. These ledgers were the means by which the solicitors were paid by their employers and they are the best surviving evidence of who was under suspicion and who was tried by the Mint during the Restriction Period.

Unfortunately the information is recorded differently in different years. Some years include only tallies of how much money was owed. Other years include itemised lists of services listed under the name of the accused, ranging from drafting the indictment, to making copies, or traveling to a trial. The best records can be found for the years 1804-1806 and 1814-1820. However, even within these good years, sometimes only those who faced a trial are listed, and in others those under suspicion also appear. Together the listings in the ledgers provide wonderful details, but are incredibly limiting for historians seeking to understand wider patterns of prosecution across the years. The fact that Mint prosecutions were split between the Old Bailey courthouse, and the Quarter Sessions of Middlesex and the Borough makes Mint legal strategies all the more difficult to follow, as each of these courts had their own records and recording policies.<sup>42</sup> In the seven years prior to 1800, Patrick Colquhoun claimed the Registers of the Mint showed more than 650 prosecutions related to coining offences, and this is roughly in line with what appears to be the trend throughout the Restriction Period, suggesting continuity rather than change in their prosecution strategy and making it difficult to infer anything about possible anti-Irishness.<sup>43</sup> What details of discretionary prosecution we do have from the Mint suggests that the strength of evidence rather than nationality was the most important criteria used when deciding whether to pursue a defendant. Within the ledgers, there are a number of suspects for which defective evidence is blamed for a lack of trial. In other cases, it would seem the Mint was only too

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<sup>42</sup> See 'Royal Mint: Prosecutions for Coinage Offences. Accounts. Solicitor's Bills for prosecution charges'. *The National Archives*, MINT 15/9 (1803-1815) and MINT 15/10 (1815-1826).

<sup>43</sup> Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*. 19.



happy to let the Bank of England pay for the prosecution, if the defendant was also accused of possession of forged notes.<sup>44</sup>

The most consistently recorded evidence pertaining to the Mint's legal strategy comes from a small proportion of their London-area cases, found in the *Old Bailey Proceedings*. These cases represent just under one third of those for whom we have evidence, and as felonious cases, are of the more serious sort. The true number under suspicion is undoubtedly much higher than the surviving records suggest, meaning the records in the *Old Bailey Proceedings* could be a considerably smaller proportion of the actual numbers. Nevertheless, they are the only surviving records consistently kept across the two decades. Looking only at these cases year by year, ranging from a low of six prosecutions in 1820, to a high of twenty-six in 1816, it would appear that the Mint did not drastically change its prosecution strategy over time (see Table 6.1). At least, across the whole period it did not prosecute significantly different numbers of people in different years. The Mint's cases were against those involved in counterfeiting, selling, or uttering the coinage of the realm. More than half had been caught uttering coins – mostly shillings. Another fifth were arrested for selling counterfeit coin, most of those in a series of sting operations organised by officers seeking rewards. The rest were charged for their involvement in the manufacturing process.

63 out of 377 (16.7 per cent) surviving cases at the Middlesex Sessions and the Southwark Sessions involved Irish defendants. The proportion was even higher amongst those prosecuted by the Mint at the Old Bailey at roughly 26.5 per cent. This supports Peter King's findings that the Irish were heavily involved in offences against the coin of the realm. However the numbers of Irish defendants are quite few, so I am not convinced we have the evidence to come to that conclusion. Only one Irish defendant was identified in each of 1810, 1813, and 1817. In 1816 that number is thirteen, which may look like an Irish coining

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<sup>44</sup> MINT 15/9; MINT 15/10.

**Table 6.1: Number of Irish defendants per year prosecuted by the Mint in London.**

Year	Irish	Total		Year	Irish	Total
1801	3	16		1811	3	11
1802	2	12		1812	2	13
1803	7	18		1813	1	18
1804	2	7		1814	4	14
1805	3	17		1815	4	7
1806	2	11		1816	13	26
1807	4	8		1817	1	4
1808	4	10		1818	3	22
1809	4	11		1819	2	12
1810	1	13		1820	3	6

plague, but instead is largely explained by several husband-wife pairs who were caught and tried together, thus driving up the numbers. What we can see is that those London-area people being charged by the Mint up to about 1806 tended to be repeat offenders, with a number listed as facing their second or third offences. After 1806 this information is no longer recorded.<sup>45</sup> A notice in the *Morning Post* in 1807 suggested that the practice of targeting major offenders was in fact working, noting that ‘owing to the exertion of the Solicitor of the Mint’ was ‘nearly suppressed altogether’.<sup>46</sup> It would seem that this group of major offenders may have included a slightly larger number of Irish individuals than we might expect given the population – though nothing to warrant Patrick Colquhoun’s claim that the Irish were plaguing London with false coinage. If Colquhoun was correct, the records of the Mint do not allow us to test the claim. Yet, the low number of felonious cases suggest that prosecution was not heavily used by the Mint as a deterrent – though I am sure those who suffered at the hands of the justice system and were made examples of would disagree.

<sup>45</sup> MINT 15/9; MINT 15/10.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Sogui e favole to fingo’, *The Morning Post*, 11 November 1817, Issue 11459, BL Newspapers, II.

## ***The Bank of England***

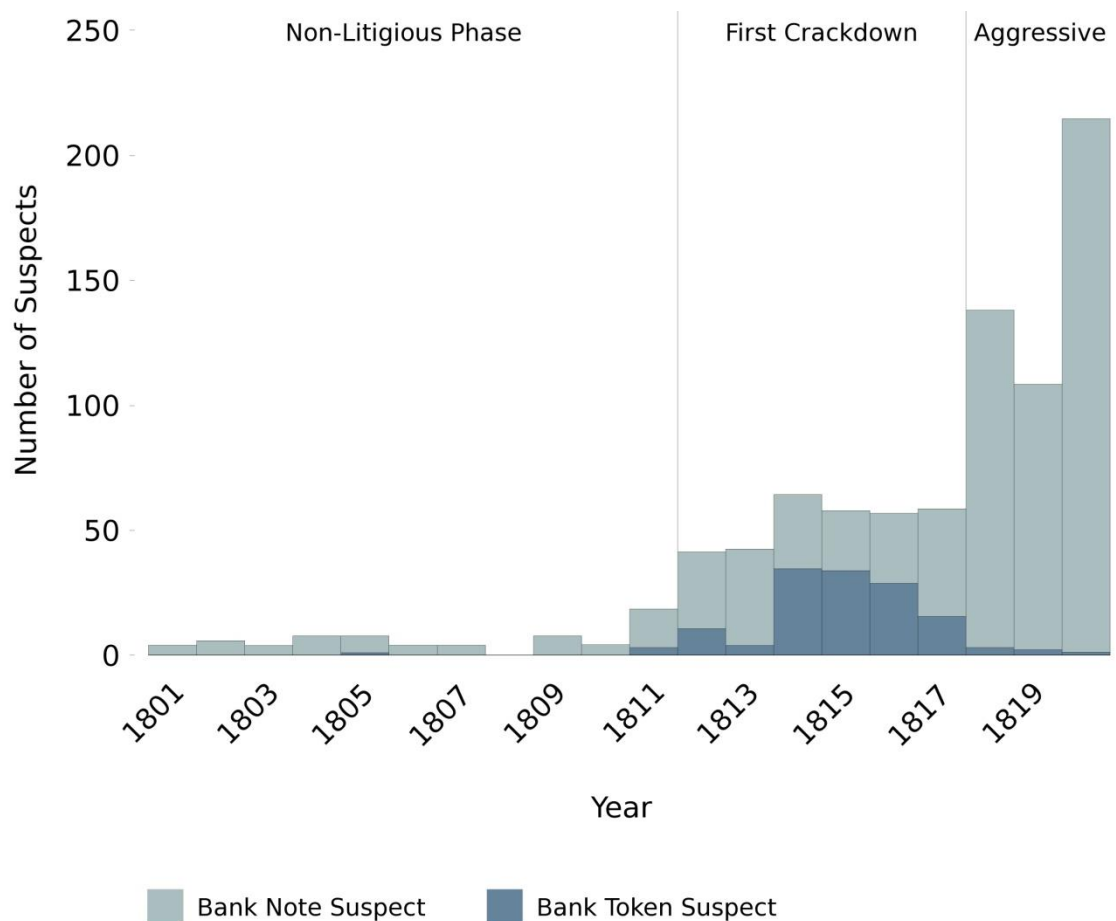
The Bank had a different strategy. In the early years of the Restriction Period it preferred the technological advances described above to direct prosecution. After 1811 the Bank considerably changed its approach, opting instead for an aggressive litigious policy. The number of accused per year increased considerably after 1811, and jumps up dramatically in 1818, as can be seen in Figure 6.3. These three distinct periods of prosecution make it possible to ask questions about how these different strategies affected the Irish in London.

The exact number of people pursued by the Bank is difficult to measure. The *Old Bailey Proceedings* provide a useful list of cases that went to trial, but the minute books of the Bank's 'Committee for Lawsuits' suggest many more individuals had their day in court than the proceedings would have us believe – particularly those involved in uttering cases involving bank tokens. The Bank's internal documents also list a number of individuals who were accused and investigated but who did not go to trial, including those who the Bank decided not to prosecute based on the weakness of the evidence against them, those who were admitted as witnesses against other defendants, and those that the Grand Jury refused to send onwards to trial.<sup>47</sup> Because these lists consistently include not only those who were tried, but also many of those who were accused, they are particularly helpful for understanding who is finding their way into the early stages of the justice system as a suspected criminal, and provide a window into the decision making process of victims that is simply unavailable in shoplifting and pocket picking cases.

These sets of records tell us that between 1801 and 1820 the Bank either charged or considered charging at least 884 Londoners for crimes against the currency. A small minority are recidivists who were charged on more than one

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<sup>47</sup> See 'Committee for Lawsuits – Minutes (1802-1821)' *The Bank of England Archives*. (M5/307-324); 'A Return of the Names of all Persons Committed for Trial (1809-1829)' *The Bank of England Archives*. (F2/120); searched for all offences where the offence category is 'coining offences', between 1801 and 1820, *OBPO*.



**Figure 6.3: Bank prosecution strategies.**

The number of individuals in London pursued per year by the Bank of England for currency-related crime.

occasion, but this involves only a very few cases. Individuals who were tried for multiple charges and appear multiple times during the same court session were not double-counted – for example, those tried for both uttering and possession, a strategy used by the Bank to ensure that at least one of the charges ended in a conviction. This list does not include everyone the Bank turned their eye towards, but it does represent a large proportion of those in London under serious consideration, most of whom were eventually convicted. The years can be broken up into three periods, each of which shows markedly different rates of capture amongst the suspected criminals. The first period, which I have dubbed the non-litigious phase, runs from 1801 to 1811. In this period only one individual every two months comes under suspicion. The second period, the first crackdown phase, goes from 1812 to 1817, during which just over one person

per week is captured. The final period, the aggressive phase, runs from 1818 to 1820.<sup>48</sup> In this last period the number of people under suspicion jumps again to one person every other day.

These three periods did not happen by accident. Instead, they were a response by the Bank to an increase in currency-related crime. As the number of forged notes in circulation increased, so too did the number of prosecutions. In the non-litigious phase the number of forged notes caught by the Bank's inspectors was an average of just over 5,000 per year. During the first crackdown that number jumped to almost 20,000 per year, and it jumped again to 27,500 in the aggressive period.<sup>49</sup> How many of those were in London is anyone's guess, but the fact that an increasing proportion of the Bank's prosecution strategy shifted towards London suggests that the capital had become the epicentre of the nation's problem.

We see evidence of this by comparing prosecution on the national scale to that in the capital. Nationwide, the Bank's rates of prosecution are fairly closely tied to the number of forged notes circulating at any given time. On average one person was sent to the Old Bailey for trial for every 100-250 forged notes in existence.<sup>50</sup> This fluctuates a little year-upon-year, and is on the higher end in the middle years, but overall is relatively stable. However, if we focus only on London, the number of forged notes per individual pursued by the Bank shows a different pattern. In the non-litigious phase the ratio is 818 forged notes per suspect, dropping significantly to 345 during the first crackdown and 171 forged notes in the aggressive period. As time went on, a higher proportion of cases nationwide were now occurring against London offenders.<sup>51</sup> This means that although most

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<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that the temporal scope of this thesis project has limited my analysis to the years 1801 to 1820; if this were a full study of prosecution patterns by the Bank of England it would be far wiser to extend this to a study of 1797 to 1821, which is the extent of the entire Restriction Period.

<sup>49</sup> 'Number of forged notes brought to the Bank. Statistics of those prosecuted and convicted (1797-1834).' *The Bank of England Archives* (F2/112).

<sup>50</sup> 'Number of forged notes brought to the Bank. Statistics of those prosecuted and convicted (1797-1834).' *The Bank of England Archives* (F2/112).

<sup>51</sup> See: 'Account of prosecutions for counterfeiting' (1804-1817). *The Bank of England Archives* (F2/118-119); 'A return of the names of all persons committed for trial' (1809-1829). *The Bank of England Archives* (F2/120).

people were still getting away with their crimes, higher proportions of the people involved in this illicit trade in London were getting, and the Bank's attention for stamping out this problem was shifting dramatically towards the capital.

There were other unique characteristics about the three phases I have described, besides the number of notes circulating in the realm. In the non-litigious phase the evidence suggests that the Bank made an effort only to prosecute those who were heavily involved in currency crime. Prosecuting was expensive, costing an average of £235 to £285 per conviction, depending on the year, all in an attempt to punish those who tried to defraud the Bank of £1 or £2, depending on the note.<sup>52</sup> It is no wonder then that during the first decade of the nineteenth century the Bank's Committee for Lawsuits spent more time and energy on individuals with payments in arrears, which if resolved would bring in money rather than send it out in the form of legal fees.<sup>53</sup> With this in mind it is perhaps not surprising that when Richard Gavan was apprehended in 1809 by the officers of the Marlborough Street police office after uttering a dollar token, he was released without legal action. The dollar was a Spanish coin that had been over-stamped by the Bank with the head of the British King for use in Britain, and was under the remit of the Bank, so it was up to them to prosecute; however, they chose to discharge Gavan on the grounds that he had been intoxicated when he committed the crime, and had only uttered a single dollar. The Bank thus saved the cost of his trial. Gavan was lucky; it would appear that no one benefited from such leniency again.<sup>54</sup>

During the first crackdown the Bank increased its rate of prosecution against those involved in producing and passing off false notes, but also focused for the first time on prosecuting offenders related to Bank tokens (coins), as can be seen above in Figure 6.3. A few isolated token cases appear prior to 1812, but they

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> The Bank never stopped chasing those in arrears, but for good examples of the scale of this practice compared to cases related to currency crime see 'Minutes – Committee for Law Suits'. *The Bank of England Archives*. Especially (M5/308 and M5/309).

<sup>54</sup> 'Minutes – Committee for Law Suits: 22 August 1809'. *The Bank of England Archives* (M5/309, p. 26).

were rare, despite the fact that it had been illegal since 1804. In the aggressive phase, the Bank prosecuted as widely as possible, and was content to charge utterers no matter how slight their crime, as long as the evidence was in place to warrant a conviction. Had Mr. Gavan been caught committing the same crime in 1818 he almost certainly would have found himself on a convict ship bound for Australia shortly thereafter.

Most of the people accused and taken to court through all three periods had been involved with uttering forged bank notes. Uttering was the most public form of currency crime and it was also the most personal, involving a face-to-face transaction between two people. The manufacturing of forged notes took place behind closed and in many cases heavily guarded doors, and typically relied upon tips from the public or disgruntled former associates to lead to prosecutions.<sup>55</sup> As Palk notes, the Bank's interest was solely in securing a conviction in these uttering cases to remove the offender from the streets. To achieve this aim the Bank devised a strategy in which it allowed large numbers of these uttering defendants to plead guilty to a lesser charge of possession, which came with a sentence of transportation rather than death.<sup>56</sup> This strategy reduced costs for the Bank by shortening the length of time its solicitors had to spend prosecuting each case, meaning many more people could be convicted for the same price, and a greater deterrent was created to ward off would-be criminals because more of them were caught and charged than before.

So how did the Irish fare across these three periods? According to the records, suspicion of the Irish is highest in the earliest period, when they represented twelve per cent of all Bank suspects. That drops in half in the first crackdown, to just six per cent. Surprisingly, this is the opposite of what we might expect, because it is during the crackdown that the Bank began prosecuting individuals

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<sup>55</sup> There are a number of cases in the *Old Bailey Proceedings* in which officers testify that they 'acted on information' or some similar phrase, about a suspected forger or counterfeiter. For an example of suspected forgers, see 'April 1814, trial of Mary Watts (t18140420-73)' or 'April 1819, trial of Henry Dart, and Mary Ann Griffiths (t18190421-113)', *OBPO*. For a coining case, see 'July 1802, trial of Joseph Rodgers, Mary Rodgers, Edward Horn (t18020714-8)', *OBPO*.

<sup>56</sup> Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, 92–96.

for offences against the Bank's metal coinage. As Peter King and Patrick Colquhoun pointed out, the Irish had a reputation for crimes related to false coins in particular; it would seem logical then that the proportion of Irish criminals pursued by the bank during the crackdown on coins would be higher than at any other time. Nevertheless, the evidence shows the opposite is true – at least across all trials. Amongst those charged by the Bank with crimes related to coins, the Irish appear in eleven per cent of all cases, though this amounts to only fourteen defendants in six years. However, focusing on only note-related offenders during the first crackdown, the six per cent Irish rate drops to four per cent.<sup>57</sup> In the aggressive phase, at the end of the period of interest, the proportion of Irish identified rebounded slightly to seven per cent, but was still considerably lower than it had been in the non-litigious stage.<sup>58</sup>

It is worth qualifying that the extent by which Irish crime apparently decreased across the entire latter two phases is only 40 Irish individuals. If a single extra Irish defendant could have been identified every three months over the period there would be no decline to speak of. Few statisticians would be satisfied with the statistical significance of these findings given a difference of only 40 across 884 entries. However, in comparison with the twenty-one-fold increase in the number of English prosecutions over the same period, relative stability amongst the Irish is itself notable. Irish prosecution rates appear to be highest in the pre-1811 period. Yet, there is very little overt anti-Irishness visible in these pre-1811 trials. There are however, some hints of differences between the two groups in the non-litigious period. The accounts suggest that the jury believed the testimony of witnesses in thirty-two out of forty-six Irish defendants (70 per cent). By comparison, sixty-five out of one hundred eighteen non-Irish were convicted on the strength of the testimony against them (55 per cent). This is

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<sup>57</sup> During the first crackdown period (1812-1817), Irish defendants account for 14 cases related to bank tokens, and only 8 cases related to bank notes. The total number of coin-related cases prosecuted by the Bank during this period is 132 and note-related offences amount to 202 prosecutions. Compiled from *OBPO*, the 'Committee for Law Suits – Minutes (1802-1821)', (M5/307-324), and 'A return of the names of all persons committed for trial (1809-1829)', (F2/120)

<sup>58</sup> Raw numbers: In the first period, 8 of the 69 (11.59 per cent) Bank suspects were Irish or probably Irish based on the methods described in the previous chapters. In the middle period that was 21 of 334 (6.29 per cent) Bank suspects, and in the last period it was 34 out of 481 (7.07 per cent) Bank suspects.



distinct from those who admitted their guilt or who were found not guilty. However, the numbers are small and cannot form the basis of strong conclusions. If anything, the testimony in these trials would suggest that those convicted – be they Irish or not – were in fact guilty of their crime. Similarities in treatment outweigh overt evidence of differences. For example, a pair of crimes committed in 1803 follow nearly identical narratives, despite one involving an Irishman and another involving an Englishman from Cheshire.

In February 1803, Irish-born John Brown was charged with uttering a counterfeit half guinea to Sarah Maypower, a publican's wife in Blackhorse-court. Like many utterers, he paid first with a good coin, to build trust with his victim, before asking for it back so that he could pay with a smaller denomination piece. The good coin was swapped for a bad one, and Brown attempted to mask his deceit by arguing with his friend about who should be forced to pay for their drinks. Brown presumably hoped that in the confusion, the publican would be relieved to receive the money, and would not check it too closely. Unfortunately for Brown, Maypower did notice and he was convicted of his crime.<sup>59</sup>

The same scenario had played out two months earlier, in December at the Bear public house in Eastcheap, this time with Huin Blag the culprit. Blag had been born in Cheshire according to the *Middlesex Criminal Registers*.<sup>60</sup> Like Brown, Blag was purchasing alcohol, and made payment with a good half guinea coin. Also like Brown, he used an accomplice to create a diversion, at which point he swapped a good coin for a false one.<sup>61</sup>

Both men had used the same trick. Both had targeted publicans with female barmaids. Both had been drinking. Both were outsiders to the community (though we do not have enough evidence to know how recently arrived either man had been, as neither case appears in *The Times* newspaper where we might have found additional details of the defendants). Both were roughly in the same age demographic: Brown was 26, and Blag was 34. Both were probably guilty,

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<sup>59</sup> April 1803, trial of John Brown (t18030420-130)', *OBPO*.

<sup>60</sup> HO 26, Middlesex (1803), Page 4.

<sup>61</sup> 'January 1803, trial of Huin Blag (t18030112-99)', *OBPO*.

and the jury agreed. Both received the same sentence: six months in Newgate prison and to 'give security for good behaviour six months' further. Everything about these trials is identical from the surviving evidence. While it is not possible to conclude from this example alone that the Irish were treated in an unbiased manner, accounts like these certainly suggest there was nothing out of the ordinary that set the Irish apart as distinctly vulnerable to prosecution for this type of crime.

Nevertheless, the Irish were over-represented in this earlier period, and the same cannot be said for the later years. The change in the Bank's strategy suggests that the less aggressive the Bank was in its policy to prosecute those individuals involved in currency crime, the more likely Irish people were to find themselves amongst the condemned. When the Bank shifted its efforts towards stamping out currency crime, prosecuting widely anyone against whom there was a sound case for conviction, the proportion of Irish defendants declined. For an explanation of this phenomenon, we must look at the systems in place for catching criminals and for driving them towards prosecution.

### ***Strategies for Apprehending Offenders***

The Bank was engaged in a national strategy to end currency crime, but for that strategy to work it needed people to provide information, gather evidence, and even to capture suspects on its behalf. Since uttering typically involved an exchange between a shopkeeper and a customer, it was up to the shopkeeper to undertake this activity. Evidence is particularly important in currency crime. A successful prosecution invariably included being able to present for the jury the instrument of the crime – either the note or the coin that had been involved in the illegal transaction. In the courtroom, expert witnesses routinely testified to the falsity of such coins and notes. But to be able to make this testimony the coin or note had to be in court during the trial. This explains why so many accused, such as Irish-born Mary Haycock attempted to swallow or otherwise dispose of bad coins or notes in their possession once confronted by the shopkeeper or an

officer.<sup>62</sup> This was not an Irish trick, as there are many examples of English individuals doing the same in an attempt to hide the evidence, demonstrating that many, regardless of nationality, knew the tricks of the trade.<sup>63</sup> When shopkeepers received a forgery, they had to be sure that exact piece of paper or coin could be tied to the person who gave it to them. The 1812 case against Thomas Flannigan for uttering a false note showcases this well. Samuel Clark, a spirits dealer who claimed to have received a note from Flannigan, was queried by the prosecution: 'Q. Take the note that I produce to you, and tell me whether that is the note - A. That is the note, I know it by my hand writing being writ upon it at the time'.<sup>64</sup> Clark, like many shopkeepers, had learned to write the name and address of customers on bank notes so that they could be identified in the future if the note proved to be false.<sup>65</sup> This process probably grew organically shortly after the advent of bank notes, when the first shopkeepers became victims of forgery and needed a way to protect themselves. The evidence was so important, that Cork-born Eleanor Lee got off a charge of uttering when the shopkeeper to whom she uttered carelessly gave the false coin to her child, who ran off to play with it. That undermined the evidence and resulted in Lee walking free, despite what seems like an otherwise solid case against her.<sup>66</sup> Over time this practice of keeping notes well documented became standard, meaning the Bank was better equipped to prosecute than it had been in the earliest years of the Restriction Period. Suspect coins too were kept separate, usually by marking them, or putting them aside, or wrapping them in a piece of paper so that they were not mixed up with others in the till.<sup>67</sup>

It is difficult to say with confidence if shopkeepers were more suspicious of the Irish than the non-Irish, although the evidence suggests the Irishness of an individual was probably not to blame for what suspicion someone did attract. In 1803, Irish-born linen dealer, Peter Gregory bought himself a drink at the Boar's

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<sup>62</sup> 'July 1801, trial of Mary Haycock (t18010701-5)', *OBPO*.

<sup>63</sup> See: 'September 1803, trial of John Paul (t18030914-22)', *OBPO*.

<sup>64</sup> 'April 1812, trial of Thomas Flannigan (t18120408-31)', *OBPO*.

<sup>65</sup> To see evidence of the extent of this practice, see: searched for all offences where the transcription matches 'wrote' and offence category is coining offences, between 1801 and 1820, *OBPO*.

<sup>66</sup> 'April 1805, trial of Eleanor Lee (t18050424-138)', *OBPO*.

<sup>67</sup> For example, 'February 1801, trial of Stephen Caton (t18010218-82)' or 'April 1811, trial of Catherine Roach. alias Murphy (t18110403-40)', *OBPO*.

Head pub in Exeter Street with a forged £1 note. The barmaid, who gave testimony at his trial, stated that she had asked him to write his name on the note, but did not otherwise find the matter unusual. It was not until the Bank of England returned the note that the landlord was alerted to a problem.<sup>68</sup> As a merchant and a previous customer known to the publican, Gregory was probably reasonably well dressed, and was able to pass off the note at the point of sale without arising undue suspicion.

Yet prior acquaintance was not a condition of accepting such payment. Seventeen-year-old Eliza Callaghan, described by her publican victim as someone who ‘appeared to be an Irishwoman’, and was not known to the staff of the establishment, purchased some liquor at the Lord Hood public house in Limehouse with a false £1 note in 1820. A week later, her accomplice, John Newnam tried to do the same. This time, the publican’s wife was immediately suspicious and took the note to her husband, who shouted at the man, “That is a bad note, you shan’t have change. I shall keep the note, and you had better be gone”. The landlord’s brother later told the court that he had noticed and recognised Callaghan lingering around the premises as Newnam attempted to pass off the false bank note. By that point, he told the court that they ‘had already discovered the first note to be a bad one’ and they sent for the headborough to make the arrest.<sup>69</sup>

These two cases involve reasonably similar circumstances: someone that we can be fairly certain was Irish (one Irish born, one described as ‘appeared to be an Irishwoman’) attempting to buy a small quantity of alcohol at a London pub with a £1 note whose value far exceeded the payment due. One customer was known to the landlord and had a respectable business dealing in linen, and the other was a young woman who was unknown to her victim and who was observed acting rather suspiciously by a number of people. Both initially got away with the crime, receiving both their alcohol and their change. Nothing in either account suggests anything about their Irishness affected the situation. Instead, in the case

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<sup>68</sup> ‘April 1803, trial of Peter Gregory (t18030420-68)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>69</sup> ‘September 1820, trial of Eliza Callaghan, John Newnam, and John Madden (t18200918-57)’, *OBPO*.

of Callaghan, the landlord's brother testified that he had become even more suspicious when he overheard three men, who he believed to be accomplices of Callaghan, say 'Come, I am not going to wait any longer' and leave quickly when they saw she had received her change from the note.<sup>70</sup> In neither case do we see anything we might call anti-Irish bias – though we must be wary to distinguish between what really happened and what is recorded in the surviving account. Instead, what we see is a keen eye by one publican, watching for suspicious people in an attempt to protect the business. In this case, the young woman happened to be Irish, but that seems to be entirely incidental.

Nevertheless, distrusting strangers no doubt played a factor in the decision to prosecute. Sarah Taylor, an ale house keeper, recounted the cause of her suspicion against John Jones in 1818, stating that 'It struck me that the note was bad, by his coming so far, and passing several other public-houses before he came to mine'.<sup>71</sup> Jones had given an address when queried by the publican, which made it clear to Taylor that her pub was not the most convenient place for Jones to spend his money and may have been a strategy for pawning off the bad note on a stranger. Her suspicion in this case was correct and is one of the more overt cases in which an accuser explicitly points to suspicion of the individual rather than suspicion of the money.<sup>72</sup>

It was also up to the shopkeepers to detain a suspect when he or she had committed a crime, while at the same time alerting a constable or a watchman to arrest the individual and haul him or her off to gaol. This almost invariably required more than one person. None of the cases that resulted in a trial included testimony from a shopkeeper who claimed to be on his or her own at the time of the incident. Either an apprentice or the master was on hand in the building – often in the counting room or the parlour – who could be sent to fetch a watchman. Elizabeth Oliffe sent her young daughter to fetch her uncle to help apprehend the culprits who had attempted to pay for a loaf of bread with bad

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<sup>70</sup> 'September 1820, trial of Eliza Callaghan, John Newnam, and John Madden (t18200918-57)', *OBPO*.

<sup>71</sup> 'September 1818, trial of John Jones (t18180909-83)', *OBPO*.

<sup>72</sup> There are a few other such examples. See 'November 1814, trial of Michael Mullens (t18141130-117)' and 'October 1815, trial of Thomas Priest (t18151025-67)', *OBPO*.

money. Had the little girl not been present Oliffe may have decided it was safer to turn the customers away quietly and politely.<sup>73</sup>

Safety for the shopkeepers was a real concern; several cases recount violent struggles and even blows to the head and body between shopkeepers and the accused.<sup>74</sup> The utterer could face death if caught, and with nothing to lose when confronted, many fought viciously to maintain their freedom. In 1818 a cheese monger named William Hutchinson was nearly stabbed for asking some tough questions of a man who had attempted to pay with a forged bank note.<sup>75</sup> Women, elderly shopkeepers, and physically slight individuals perhaps thought twice before engaging in a physical confrontation with a potentially dangerous criminal. Many encounters between utterers and their victims probably ended in the offender being shown the door. This may have been a shirking of one's civic duty, but it was a good result for both the shopkeeper and the criminal. The shopkeeper had lost nothing, and the criminal retained his or her liberty.

It would seem that turning someone away for attempting to utter false currency was commonplace. Irishmen Richard Joyce and John Halfpenny were both convicted of uttering false shillings in March of 1803. They first offered the coins to a publican in Leadenhall Street in exchange for some gin. The publican, Margaret Singleton, refused the coin, and they paid instead with a different piece. The same day, the pair tried again to spend the money, this time at Charles Bloxam's greengrocer, where the man's wife said:

How can you think of coming here to pass bad money, and returned him the shilling; upon which he made use of bad language; my boy came in, and gave me a caution of the man; I said to Joyce, don't kick up a bobbery here, but be careful how you get rid of your bad money, otherwise I shall secure you.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> 'May 1809, trial of Mary Ryan and Eleanor Connor (t18090517-79)', *OBPO*.

<sup>74</sup> Searched for all offences where the transcription matches 'struggle' and offence category is coining offence, between 1801 and 1820, *OBPO*.

<sup>75</sup> 'December 1818, trial of William Connor (t18181202-25)', *OBPO*.

<sup>76</sup> 'April 1803, trial of Richard Joyce and John Halfpenny (t18030420-128)', *OBPO*.

Perhaps most surprising is that Bloxham was also a constable, and in his discretion had decided not to arrest the men. However, he did follow the pair into a third shop, where again they tried to spend the money, this time on some tobacco, and finally they were confronted and detained.<sup>77</sup> The fact that two adult males were on hand in the third shop to make the arrest probably made Bloxham feel safer about the confrontation. As above, it would seem the Irishness of the pair had nothing to do with their arrest; instead it was their stubborn insistence on committing a crime that did them in. We only have a record of their crimes because of their stubbornness; given the very small number of crimes prosecuted over the years, it is clear that most people who attempted to utter counterfeit money were simply refused. Unfortunately, because we have only a handful of cases in which the matter went to trial, it is impossible to tell from the surviving evidence if the Irish were less likely to be turned away politely.

Shopkeepers risked prosecution themselves if they falsely accused someone. To an untrained eye the differences between an authentic and a forged note were small, and people were often confused about what was real and what was not. In December of 1811, James Hulme, a pawn broker in Bow Street falsely accused a man of uttering two suspicious bank notes that proved to be true. On the advice of his solicitor, Hulme was forced to pay the accused £20 for false imprisonment.<sup>78</sup> These situations made shopkeepers wary, eager not to take a loss, nor to falsely accuse someone. One group of publicans in the east end tried to minimise losses by refusing to accept the oft-counterfeited old copper halfpence. However, this conservative strategy backfired and in 1808 the Mint circulated a menacing letter to the publicans, warning that ‘all persons are hereby cautioned not to refuse in Payment such legal Monies under any pretence whatsoever...The Promoters, Aiders, and Abettors whereof, will be forthwith prosecuted with the utmost rigour the Law has provided for such Offences’.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> ‘April 1803, trial of Richard Joyce and John Halfpenny (t18030420-128)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>78</sup> ‘A Petition from James Hulme to the Bank of England, 18 December 1811’ *Committee for Law Suits* (M5/311). *Bank of England Archives*, 121.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Circular letter issued by the Solicitor to the Mint enclosing a caution to publicans, tradesmen and others against the prevention of the circulation of the old copper half pence’ (1808). *The National Archives* (MINT 8/25).

These various threats and pressures upon shopkeepers likely go a long way towards explaining the low number of cases brought forwards before 1811. But the Bank needed the shopkeepers on its side if it was to catch criminals involved in this activity. As an act of good faith it offered to repay Mr. Hulme the £20 he had lost in the false imprisonment case – though in a similar situation James Henshaw found his petition to the Bank for compensation rejected.<sup>80</sup> To promote a more widespread effort the Bank decided to incentivise shopkeepers to play a role in ending this crime, so in 1804 they introduced a rewards scheme: a standing reward set at the rather generous amount of £50 for apprehending and convicting persons guilty of forging, uttering, or possessing false bank notes.<sup>81</sup> Throughout the remainder of the Restriction Period the bank made regular payments of rewards.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, the incentives did not work – at least, not amongst the shopkeepers. Though many did receive rewards of varying sizes, almost none appear more than once amongst the rewardees, despite the longevity of the programme. This suggests that while some of these individuals were probably very grateful for the reward money they received, it was not enough for them to actively seek criminals engaged in this activity.

Instead, particularly in the early years of the century, the accounts suggest that the cases that made it to trial as a result of an interaction in a shop were those for which the shopkeeper followed the standard practices of setting aside the suspected coin or note (or in the case of some forged notes, ensured that the name and address of the accused was written on the back so that the culprit could be confronted in the future), was in a position to safely confront the individual, and was able to detect the crime in the first place. No shopkeepers involved in a currency case were brazen enough to tell the jury that they had suspected someone as a likely utterer of false money because they were Irish. Only once was a shopkeeper accused of such xenophobia, and this arose from the prisoner Margeret Collins' own statement that her accused said 'he would make an example of my country he would hang every man and woman of the contry

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<sup>80</sup> 'Petition from James Henshaw. 8 September 1819, p. 190-191' *Minutes – The Committee for Law Suits. The Bank of England Archives.* (M5/322).

<sup>81</sup> 'The Committee for Law Suits'. *The Bank of England Archives.* (M5/307, 17 April 1804), 32

<sup>82</sup> See 'Minutes – Committee for Lawsuits 1802-1821'. *The Bank of England Archives.* (M5/307-324).



[sic]'.<sup>83</sup> Trial accounts almost never overtly point to evidence that the person who arrested an individual had been disdainful of the Irish. Those types of thoughts tended to stay private. The courtroom also seemed to have a transformative effect on people. Magnus Huber's work on spoken English in the *Old Bailey Proceedings* suggested a lower than expected level of contractions and informal language, suggesting people chose their words carefully in front of a jury, whether or not they were on trial.<sup>84</sup>



The rewards from the Bank did motivate another group. A network of constables learned very quickly that they could make a considerable amount of money working for the Bank in this way. John and Thomas Foy of Marylebone routinely collected rewards from the Bank for their assistance in apprehending and convicting culprits.<sup>85</sup> Constables and watchmen like the Foyes began to search out suspicious individuals both to keep criminals off the streets, but also in an attempt to bring money into their own pockets. This network of professional thief-takers and officers that were able to survive on Crown payments offered to encourage prosecutions of petty criminals, worth between £10 and £40 for successfully convicting a felon.<sup>86</sup> Their income was supplemented further by private rewards offered by victims and advertised widely in the newspaper as well as the reliable rewards from institutions such as the Bank. Some unscrupulous thief-takers found new and increasingly nefarious ways to earn even more, including demanding protection money from petty criminals in exchange for turning a blind eye towards continued criminal activity, and even tricking innocent but gullible men into committing crimes in order to catch them and turn them in for a reward.<sup>87</sup> Captain Melville called the reward system 'blood money', noting:

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<sup>83</sup> 'June 1809, trial of Margeret Collins (t18090626-102)', *OBPO*.

<sup>84</sup> Huber, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings'.

<sup>85</sup> See 'Minutes – Committee for Lawsuits 1802-1821'. *The Bank of England Archives*. (M5/307-324).

<sup>86</sup> Bentley, *English Criminal Justice*, 7.

<sup>87</sup> Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, 'Crime and Justice - Policing in London', *OBPO*.

In 1815 alone, eighty thousand pounds was given in blood-money, an expenditure that might almost be considered as a Government subsidy for the encouragement of felony. Forty pounds was the reward offered for the conviction of certain offenders, and it was obviously to the advantage of the thief-taker not to interfere with a promising young criminal until he should commit a forty pounds crime; premature conviction was tantamount to killing the goose that should lay the golden egg, and the common cant phrase of the day, when referring to a juvenile offender, was, 'he doesn't weigh forty pounds yet'.<sup>88</sup>

We know it was the rewards driving at least some of these people who aided the Bank catch culprits, because some of them wrote to the Bank to express their disappointment that they had not been given more.<sup>89</sup> A good such example can be found in a petition from Thomas Turner, the Sergeant of one of the Hulks holding prisoners bound for Australia, who complained that men under his command had been given a bigger reward than had he, to which the bank replied 'the committee had ordered such rewards as appeared due for the services of the persons concerned'. As time went on and it became clear that the Bank was willing to prosecute anyone for whom there was a good case, rather than those who represented the major players in this crime ring, the rewards meant it became in the financial interest of a much wider group to gather and prosecute as many guilty people as possible.

Irish people were not above turning against their own countrymen to make some money. In 1801, an Irishman in the East London Militia named John Dumphy was paid five shillings a day to set a trap for fellow-Irishman Isaac Wise, who he coerced into selling him false coins. Dumphy was motivated by a need to raise money to buy out his commission so that he could return to Ireland, and was willing to set up Wise to do so. Most of the actors in that particular case seem to have been Irish, so it is perhaps best to view this case as an Irish-on-Irish conflict, rather than a case of anti-Irishness from an English party.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Josiah Flynt, 'Police Methods in London', *The North American Review*, 176 (1903), 439-440.

<sup>89</sup> 'The Committee for Law Suits'. *The Bank of England Archives*. (M5/312, 29 April), 13.

<sup>90</sup> 'July 1801, trial of Isaac Wise (t18010701-37)', *OBPO*.

In the years after 1811, the number of 'sting operations' initiated by the Bank rose dramatically, in an attempt to lure suspected criminals into selling counterfeit coins to an undercover Bank agent. Many petty criminals agreed to participate to take down their accomplices in exchange for a plea bargain with the Bank, to get out of their own prosecutions, or for the promise of rewards. This approach meant that the Bank was able to target networks of guilty individuals. One of the moles used by the Bank on more than one occasion was a woman named Mary Murt, who testified at the Old Bailey in three separate trials, involving four defendants related to incidents in October and November 1814. Murt had been given money to buy counterfeit coins with, and strict instructions on how to protect the evidence for trial. In her testimony, Murt admitted having known the defendants for nearly a year, so was able to prey on their trust of her in order to entice them into committing the crime. All four were convicted in the operation.<sup>91</sup> Murt appears again in the record in the Surrey Quarter Sessions the following year, this time helping to convict Wolfe Cohen for a similar crime.<sup>92</sup> Women like Murt were instrumental in bringing people to trial after 1811. This type of scenario is not uncommon during the Bank's litigious periods, and what we find is that overwhelmingly it is non-Irish defendants who are caught by this process, explaining some of the change we see in wider prosecution patterns. This suggests that what is interesting is not why Irish prosecutions declined, but instead why English prosecutions rose. The answer is at least in part because of the Bank's engagement with local networks to catch locals involved in this type of crime. This removed the reliance on shopkeepers to report criminal activity and instead the Bank and its agents were going out and trapping culprits.

This system of incentivising thief-catchers became so efficient that members of the public began to grumble; a letter written in *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* in 1806 complained that:

In order to come at these dealers or utterers as they are termed, where the magistrates have suspicion, they dress up some wretch to decoy the

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<sup>91</sup> 'November 1814, trial of Mary Moore (t18141130-118)'; 'November 1814, trial of Levi Cohen (t18141130-119)'; 'November 1814, trial of Jane Green and Rebecca Phillips (t18141130-120)', *OBPO*.

<sup>92</sup> Surrey Quarter Sessions 1780-1820 Transcription, QS2/6/1815/MIC/90, 'trial of Joseph Cohen', 23 October 1815. Accessed via [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

victim into the snare – Thus *they* tempt the party into the crime, and, remember the second offence is death. – In the very last sessions, which has just closed, a woman thus dressed and tutored was sent to the lodgings of a poor family, the husband was out, the wife and children were at home. The woman sold 10 bad shillings for 4 flat bits of silver. The fiend of an informer immediately flies to the constables at the door; the wretched mother is dragged away, surrounded by her children, and the gallows will groan with another victim, and another family of wretched babes will be thrown upon public charity.<sup>93</sup>

In such a climate, inexperienced newcomers such as recently arrived Irish immigrants were likely more vulnerable to unscrupulous tricks by locals. We do see complaints from newly arrived Irish individuals such as Catherine Hannagan, who in 1811 described her tale of woe:

I have been but two months out of my own country, and have been out of bed five weeks with this baby; I was put to bed on the road, I was coming to my husband. I sold my shift the last thing for a shilling; I changed that shilling I got two pennyworth of shop, and a pennyworth of bread...I was going to Gravesend to my husband. Coming along the road I met with this woman, she said if I was to go to St. Giles's I might find some of my country people who would give me a lodging; she said come along with me; I was fatigued and weak, I could not walk. It was twelve o'clock, she took me to this public-house, she said, we can rest here and have part of a pint of beer; I sat down, this woman went for the pint of beer, I gave her sixpence; the other woman said, had we not better have a drop of gin; I said, I do not mind. I was taken in custody, and by the Lord God I am in custody for holding.<sup>94</sup>

Hannagan complained she had been weary and only just arrived in London. In her tiredness had been duped by cunning locals who gave her false coin as change, which she then unwittingly gave to the barman. Hannagan was not the only newly arrived Londoner to be duped into currency crime. In May 1816, James Quinn was an Irish labourer who had been in London for fourteen months, and like many Irish men, offered his services each morning at the market in Cheapside as a day labourer. Quinn spoke very little English, and when offered a job for the day, accepted, only to discover that the task involved producing counterfeit shillings. Quinn and his fellow day-labourers were arrested and

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<sup>93</sup> G.W. 'Forgery and Coining', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, October 18, 1806, Issue 16, BL Newspapers II.

<sup>94</sup> 'September 1811, trial of Catherine Hannagan (t18110918-179)', *OBPO*.

sentenced to death.<sup>95</sup> In September of the same year, *The Times* newspaper reported that Quinn had since received a 'free pardon', despite a lack of mercy from the jury itself, perhaps 'on the ground that it did not appear that they meant to utter the counterfeit coin' and were merely poor men hired to commit the crime on someone else's behalf.<sup>96</sup> One might suggest the men's Irishness did not do them any favours in front of the jury (though technically they *were* guilty), but it seemed not to have done them any harm when it came time for pardoning.

Other foreigners too found themselves coerced into committing currency related crime. Often without their knowing. During the Napoleonic Wars, French prisoners of war and European sailors were routinely found in possession of false English coinage. However, the Mint was largely of the opinion that they had been the victims of a scam and had unknowingly bought the counterfeit money when attempting to exchange their own currency.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, these cases are relatively rare as the years press onwards.

## ***Conclusion***

By the 1810s the Bank's prosecutors had worked out an efficient way to ensure a conviction in uttering cases and trials become almost mechanical. Firstly, the shopkeeper or officer testified to seeing the accused utter the money. Secondly, that same person confirmed the note or coin presented to the jury was the same as that taken from the accused. Thirdly, an expert witness from the Bank or the Mint testified that the money was in fact false. These expert witnesses too benefited financially from the increase in prosecutions, as this work was part of their job, and thus kept them employed. That interest also extended to the Bank's solicitors. By far the biggest beneficiary of the Bank's increasing interest in criminal prosecutions was Mr. Kaye and his team. Kaye was the solicitor of the Bank throughout the whole of the period under review. In the Michaelmas Term of 1818 alone he billed over £21,495 for legal services for the work of he and his

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<sup>95</sup> 'July 1816, trial of Dennis Roerdon, Thomas Collett, James Quinn (t18160710-22)', *OBPO*.

<sup>96</sup> 'OLD BAILEY, Wednesday, Sept. 25.' *Times* [London, England] 26 Sept. 1816: 3. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>97</sup> For example, the case of Guillaume Angot of Normandy who was apprehended at Portsmouth. 'The Committee for Law Suits'. *The Bank of England Archives*. (M5/319, 16 August 1817), 120.

team.<sup>98</sup> For the lawyers and clerks who made their living from this trade, as well as for the officers and shopkeepers collecting rewards, the more defendants there were the better.

The coordinated efforts of the Bank's legal team and the officers after 1811 meant an expansion in professionalisation at the pre-trial stages of the justice system in these particular cases, which was not developed to the same degree for all classes of crime. Whereas previously the first steps of justice (from detecting a crime to deciding to take the matter before a magistrate) were usually conducted by an amateur – the victim – those who were prosecuted by the Bank and the Mint experienced a new class of professionals. The huge number of false bank notes on the streets after 1811 meant there was no shortage of people to catch and prosecute. But because there were so many to choose from, and because catching people took both time and energy, it stands to reason that those who were being caught were the easiest to apprehend rather than those that involved extensive detective work. In effect, the lowest hanging fruit was increasingly finding its way into the courts in a way that it had not done so during the previous decade, in part because the Bank had previously only been interested in major offenders. The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the low hanging fruit was English, not Irish.

As Deirdre Palk notes, the records of the Bank of England make it possible to understand the pre-prosecution decision-making process of the Bank in a way that is often impossible for other classes of crime.<sup>99</sup> The value of distant reading in this case study proved to be one in which an interesting trend was newly identifiable because of the approach. Surname analysis provided new evidence to suggest that the English were overwhelmingly the culprits of currency crime after 1811. This was not visible through close reading alone, and as Peter King discovered, it was not possible to identify the birth places of these people using the *Middlesex Criminal Registers*, as birthplace data was not recorded after 1805. That meant that our understanding of Irish involvement in currency crime had

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<sup>98</sup> 'Abstract of bill for law services by Mr. Kaye, from Michaelmas Term 1818 to 31 March 1819' *Committee for Lawsuits*. Bank of England Archives (M5/322, 24 June 1819), 109-119.

<sup>99</sup> Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, 90.

previously been based on the Bank's pre-litigious years, when few defendants actually faced trial.

The approach of course has its limits. As is the case throughout this thesis, it defines the Irish as both recent migrants and long-term Londoners. The surviving evidence means that the trials rarely make it possible to distinguish the newly arrived from the rest. Settlement examinations may be a possible route for discerning more details about the lives of the Irish defendants, and as a growing number of these are digitised as part of the genealogical explosion occurring at the moment, it may be easier to link these people. Unfortunately, my attempts to do this type of linking between settlement examinations and criminals proved largely unfruitful. These examinations tend to involve women who are about to become a burden on the parish relief system, rather than the males that dominate felonious crime records.<sup>100</sup> A defendant may not ever have undergone such an examination, and even if they did, the approach of identifying the Irish by surname necessarily means we end up with a subset of people with very common name combinations – a nightmare for nominal record linkage.

These conclusions also require the reader to accept the evidence put forth in Chapter Four that the methodology has in fact returned a subset of Irish defendants. I can appreciate that for some, this is a new type of evidence, and one that cannot always be verified through close reading on a case-by-case basis. I put forth my evidence-based case for the tool in Chapter Four, and will leave it to readers to decide for themselves if they are willing to accept the premises underlying it. In this case, I believe that surname analysis can act as a proxy for missing information about an individual, to allow us to make a judgment when other processes fail to do so.

The subsequent close reading of the trials suggests that the vast majority of trial accounts show a lack of overt anti-Irish testimony. This is not evidence that the Irish were not disadvantaged in the pre-trial stages of the justice system when it

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<sup>100</sup> LMA, *Pauper examination book for the East Smithfield part of the parish, 1742-1834, Vol. 8: 1804-1811*, P69/BOT2/B/042/MS02676/023; LMA, *Examination of Paupers 1808-15 & 1815-28, St. Botolph Aldersgate*, P69/BOT1/B/042/MS01469/001 & P69/BOT2/B/043/MS02665/001.

was up to members of the public to initiate an arrest. If this bias existed, it may have been unconscious and unintentional. Unfortunately we will not find it in written form, apart from Colquhoun's assertion in 1800 that the Irish had a reputation for this type of crime. The examples of discretionary justice described above are particularly pertinent here, as many utterers in particular (perhaps most) were sent away, refused service, but not arrested for their crime. If that is the case, then the surviving historical record will leave us blind to the fact.

What evidence we do have suggests that while the Irish were heavily involved in currency crime in the early nineteenth century, so too were the English. The dramatic growth in the number of non-Irish defendants after 1811 makes this plain. The evidence suggests that this growth is down to a change in strategy by the Bank, designed to catch a greater proportion of those involved in the illicit trade in counterfeit currency. It is not, therefore, evidence of a disproportionate rise in English currency crime of which the Irish were not a part.

This discovery means that we must revise Peter King's findings that suggest the Irish comprise twenty-eight per cent of defendants in this crime category. That may be true in the 1790s and early years of the 1800s, but the non-litigious policies of both the Mint and the Bank of England at that time mean that those conclusions are based on scant evidence, and overinflate the alleged Irish plague. The new evidence provided by the surname analysis tool and the distant reading has made it possible to see prosecutions of Irish currency crime in a longer context, which strongly suggests that the Irish were part of a city-wide trend, and did not stand out as particularly criminal. That was not possible to see by Peter King's approach, linking together the *Middlesex Criminal Registers* to the *Old Bailey Proceedings*.

The distant reading has not been able to provide these conclusions on its own – a close look at the trials themselves provides the context, as well as the opportunity to temper any claims so that they are grounded in evidence. What might at first appear to be an anti-Irish bias before 1811, looks instead like it can be best explained as a crackdown that reduced the importance of shopkeepers in



the criminal justice system and instead focused the responsibility for finding and catching counterfeiters in the hands of an increasingly professional workforce.

To take this back to the opening scenario: *if an Irishman and an Englishman commit the same currency-related crime, do they both go to trial?* If the year was before 1811, it would appear that the Irish were at a slight disadvantage. If anything, we might say that neither is likely to go to trial, but if one of them had to do so, it would probably be the Irishman. However, if it is post-1811 the answer seems to be: yes, they both go to trial. The proportion of Irish defendants dropped when the Bank put more resources into catching criminals, suggesting that the amateur system of suspecting and apprehending criminals that was in place prior to 1811 penalised the Irish – if only slightly. After 1811, from the moment a crime against the Bank was committed to the moment the death warrant was signed, culprits dealt with a different type of justice system: one in which experienced people had been hired to catch and punish people like them. This change in the way prosecutions were brought forth to the Old Bailey provides a unique window into understanding how the amateur and professional systems differed in their patterns of apprehending and pursuing criminal activity prior to the 1829 Police Act, which brought these activities under the mandate of a dedicated police force.

## 7. Cycles of Conflict

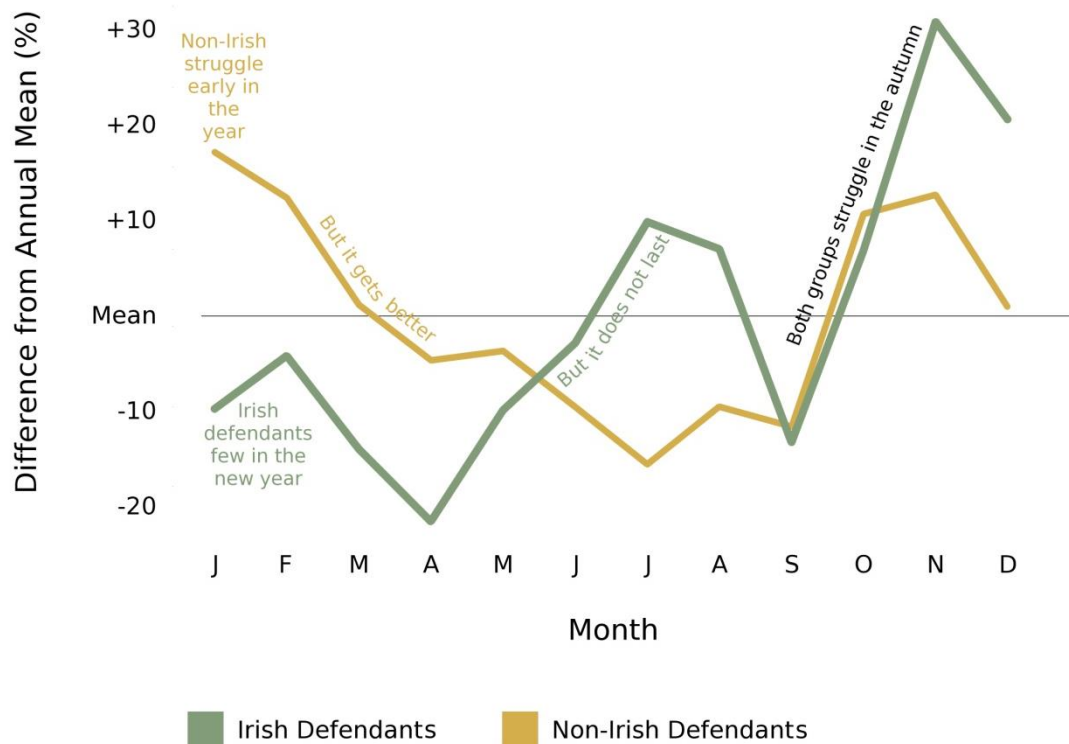
On 6 February 1789, King George III and his family sat down for dinner at Kew Palace and ate a sumptuous feast including chicken, pullet, mutton, perch, lamb, duck, veal, grouse, partridge, rabbit, and crayfish. Later that evening he enjoyed, among other things, some asparagus.<sup>1</sup> Fifteen years later on 11 April 1804, the King once again ate lamb and asparagus, but also beans, which had begun to ripen out in the sophisticated kitchen garden.<sup>2</sup> The King's table was farther removed from the influences of the seasons than that of most Londoners at the turn of the nineteenth century, as his gardeners and farmers worked hard to demonstrate his power by providing his family and guests with out-of-season specialties. But even he had to wait for the ewes to give birth to the lambs, and for the asparagus to poke through the earth. And while the King had a cherry pie for dessert that April evening, the cherries were likely preserved, as outside the cherry trees were only just in bloom. Fresh berries and fruits would have to wait or be grown in the hothouses at great expense. It is easy to forget the influence of the changing seasons on life at the turn of the nineteenth century, but for the people then living, the seasons were everything.

Importantly, they shaped who was in town. A distant reading of male defendants during the early nineteenth century (Figure 7.1) suggests that the Irish had a seasonal relationship with London, and one that differed from the wider population. The graph shows the number of male crimes per month by date of the crime, and includes all male defendants for whom a crime-date is known or applicable. These data include 95 per cent of all defendants in the *Old Bailey Proceedings* between 1801-1820, but because of the short nature of so many currency-related trial accounts (usually just a long listing of defendants who plead guilty, with no details about their specific crime), excludes most of the cases discussed in the previous chapter post-1811. It also excludes crimes that cannot be pinpointed to a single moment such as embezzlement, treason, or tax fraud. Returning from transportation before the end of your sentence was a

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<sup>1</sup> 'Factsheet: Recipes served for King George III, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1789', *Historic Royal Palaces, Kew Palace*, [http://www.hrp.org.uk/Resources/FACTSHEET\\_-\\_Recipes\\_6th\\_Feb\\_1789\\_FINAL\\_2.pdf](http://www.hrp.org.uk/Resources/FACTSHEET_-_Recipes_6th_Feb_1789_FINAL_2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 'Kew Kitchen Ledger 1789-1801' *the National Archives* (LS 9/226).



**Figure 7.1: Male felonies by month.**

Male felonies tried per month in the Old Bailey (1801-1820), by date of the crime, showing Irish and non-Irish crime. Values corrected to equalise the length of each month.

felony offence, but often the date the convict actually returned was not known; rather, it was known that he *had* returned. Despite these minor shortcomings, the vast majority of men were included in the above calculations.

According to this distant reading, Irish male crime was lowest during the winter and spring. It spiked in the summer, dipped in September, and spiked dramatically in the autumn. If we use rates of prosecution as a measure of hardship in the community, this suggests that Irish hardship is concentrated in the summer and autumn, and is comparatively less during the winter. As we can see, this is quite distinct from the non-Irish male defendants, whose moments of adversity are concentrated in the winter and in the autumn.

These differences between the monthly Irish and non-Irish rates of prosecution are not trivial; the mean monthly difference between the two groups is 14.4 per cent, rising to more than 20 per cent in the winter. Nor can the trend in Irish

prosecutions be linked to a few anomalous years. Instead, it persisted across most of the years between 1801 and 1820. The Irish appear least frequently during winter in eighteen out of the twenty years. That pattern of low winter prosecution rates was very rare amongst the non-Irish men, and occurred almost exclusively in exceptional years involving demobilisation, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Perhaps most notable is the fact that Irish crime peaked in the summer in eight years during the period, which never occurred in the non-Irish population. For some reason, at least a sixth of Irish crime was occurring at what might look like the wrong time of year.

These two different patterns suggest that the two groups are experiencing life in London differently. There are many possible explanations, but two that stand out as the most likely causes of this phenomenon. The first is that the types of crimes that the Irish were caught committing due to their migrant nature and low position in society, tended to be those that were linked to summer and autumn crimes. The second is that many Irish people were engaged in a seasonal migration between London and Ireland, which resulted in more Irish individuals in the capital during the summer and autumn. This chapter will explore the surviving evidence to discern which, if either of those hypotheses is correct.

### ***The London Seasons***

The pattern of prosecution that we see amongst the non-Irish men can be explained by looking at how life in London changed with the seasons. London in the depths of winter in the early nineteenth century was a miserable place to spend time, particularly if you were alone and had very little money. It was also an incredibly dark place. At the winter solstice, the sun rose after eight and set by four – that is, if you could see the sun through the thick grey blanket of cloud that pervades at that time of year. For the poor, light in winter was a luxury. Though gas street lighting had slowly begun to replace the ‘link boys’ and their torches,

there were many corners of London that stayed dark.<sup>3</sup> For those who could afford it, evenings were likely spent in the company of friends and strangers at the public house. But for the poorest, who knew all too well the cost of coal and candles, the choice between light and food was obvious. London in winter could be very cold, very lonely, and very dark.

By January, the gastronomical plenty of the harvest had begun to wane and gave way to a time of scarcity. Food prices began creeping up during the winter months as people competed for the best of what was left.<sup>4</sup> Exotic foodstuffs from abroad had to be rationed until the ships again returned in the spring and summer. Many of the economic opportunities that had been available in warmer months disappeared when it got cold. Writing in December, a contributor to the *Morning Chronicle* noted that ‘The season has now closed when the poor men who inhabit this district, and who are for the most part day-labourers, could obtain any employment’.<sup>5</sup> While growing cities such as Liverpool and Manchester had year-round work in the textile mills, London’s economy was not so steadfast. Come winter, those who worked in construction, or who supported the shipping industry, or who worked in niche seasonal trades ranging from jam-making, to flower selling, to washing found themselves short of employment. In some cases, such as construction or shipping, it was the weather that halted the trade. For the jam-makers, a lack of fresh berries limited options, just as it limited the King’s supper.<sup>6</sup> Some trades flourished in the winter, including that of the chimney sweeps. These boys made their living during the cold months when fires were used not just for cooking, but also for heating; the return of the warm weather left most of these young men unemployed throughout the summer.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For more on artificial lighting see, M.E. Falkus, ‘The Early Development of the British Gas Industry, 1790-1815’ *The Economic History Review*, 35 (1982), 217-234; Frederick Moore Binder, ‘Gas Light’, *Pennsylvania History*, 22 (1955), 359-373.

<sup>4</sup> Liam Brunt and Edmund Cannon, ‘The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth: The English Corn Returns as a data source in economic history, 1770-1914’ *European Review of Economic History*, 17 (2013), 318-339.

<sup>5</sup> *The Morning Chronicle*, 6 December 1816, Issue 14851, BL Newspapers, II.

<sup>6</sup> J.H. Treble, ‘The Seasonal Demand for Adult Labour in Glasgow, 1890-1914’, *Social History*, 3 (1978), 43-60.

<sup>7</sup> Tim Hitchcock, ‘Begging on the Streets of Eighteenth-Century London’, *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005), 486-487.

Apart from a few exceptional trades, for most people the winter was a time of want. Many turned to begging to cope with the shortage. Matthew Martin's report on mendicity in 1803 estimated that the 'floating mass' of beggars hovered in the region of 6,000 and was at its worst during the winter months.<sup>8</sup> For the gentry, who spent the winter in London, the timing of seasonal poverty likely seemed inconvenient. A wealthy person traveling in London could scarcely expect to make it through town without being pestered. Beggars knew the streets well and found would-be donors by keeping to the main thoroughfares. Junctions at the Strand, Covent Garden, or Lincoln's Inn were natural begging hotspots for those hoping to make some money. The inconvenience these beggars posed for the wealthy, who resented being accosted on the streets, led to what Tim Hitchcock described as a shift towards indoor relief, in an effort to keep the streets clear for those hoping to enjoy the London Season.<sup>9</sup>

Looking at this seasonal cycle of want from a criminal perspective, we see crime increased during the London winter, as the poor struggled to keep their bellies full. From its peak in January until a trough in the late summer, the rate of crime drops well below the monthly average. Given the above description of a London winter, it is not difficult to explain this trend; it maps perfectly onto the annual cycle of hardship caused by the weather. As the days got darker and colder, and opportunities for legitimate gain were scant, crime went up. When the days began to lengthen and outdoor work again became available, crime declined.

The Irish were different, as we have already seen; however, not entirely different. It is important to underline that there *was* Irish poverty and criminal activity the year round. There were Irish paupers being admitted to the parish workhouses in the depths of winter, as too were there Irish pickpockets harassing Londoners on the year's coldest days. Irish-born Peter Conner was convicted of stealing cheese and ham from his employer, Barnard Dollond on 16 February 1804, right in the heart of winter.<sup>10</sup> The weather that week had been

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<sup>8</sup> Mathew Martin, *Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Pelham, on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis*. (London, 1803), 18.

<sup>9</sup> Hitchcock, 'The Publicity of Poverty', 170, 183.

<sup>10</sup> 'February 1804, trial of Peter Conner and Andrew Burn (t18040215-67)', *OBPO*.

particularly cold, hovering around freezing for several days, and snow had fallen the previous evening.<sup>11</sup> This hardship may have contributed to Conner's decision to steal what amounted to little more than a few meals' worth of food. Yet, as a long-term resident of the city, Conner and many other Irish defendants who endured hardship in the capital at that time of year contributed to the baseline of Irish crime rather than the anomalous spikes in summer and autumn. In 1816, a letter was published in the *Morning Chronicle* that highlighted in particular the plight of the Irish poor in St. Giles who suffered during the winter:

[The Irish] whose peculiar distress renders them, perhaps at all times, the greatest objects of commiseration that are to be found in this extensive Metropolis, but more especially at this inclement season, when those employments are wholly suspended by which they contrive to get a precarious subsistence during the Summer months.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not possible to classify each defendant as part of the seasonal anomaly, or part of the baseline Irish crime rate. The evidence to support such a classification simply does not exist, as many trials are short on relevant details and few corroborating records survive. For example, was Irishman James Sheen, who was arrested for stealing a hat in the autumn of 1802, part of this seasonal phenomenon or part of the baseline Irish crime rate?

JAMES SHEEN was indicted for feloniously stealing, on the 18th of September, a hat, value 7s. the property of Samuel Clements.

The prosecutor was called, but not appearing, the prisoner was ACQUITTED.

London Jury, before Mr. Common Serjeant.<sup>13</sup>

His trial does not appear in *The Times*, which sometimes reported criminal cases. Perhaps it was not considered interesting enough for inclusion. Likewise, he is difficult to link to other historical records because his name is so common; During the period there are over 1,300 "James Sheen's" listed amongst the

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<sup>11</sup> W. Cary, 'Meteorological Table for February 1804', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 7 (1804), 98. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hw291e>

<sup>12</sup> 'The Irish Poor in St. Giles's', *The Morning Chronicle*, 17 February 1816, Issue 14600, BL Newspapers, II.

<sup>13</sup> 'October 1802, trial of James Sheen (t18021027-89)', *OBPO*.

records of the genealogical database of *Findmypast.co.uk*, including more than a hundred records related to London. Which, if any, are our James Sheen, is nearly impossible to discern. Evidence to explain this seasonal trend will therefore have to focus on material that does not *solely* rely on a close reading of individual trials. In an attempt to overcome this challenge, in the first instance I will take a closer look at the nature of the trials and the crimes, and then I will explore evidence of Irish seasonal migration in London.

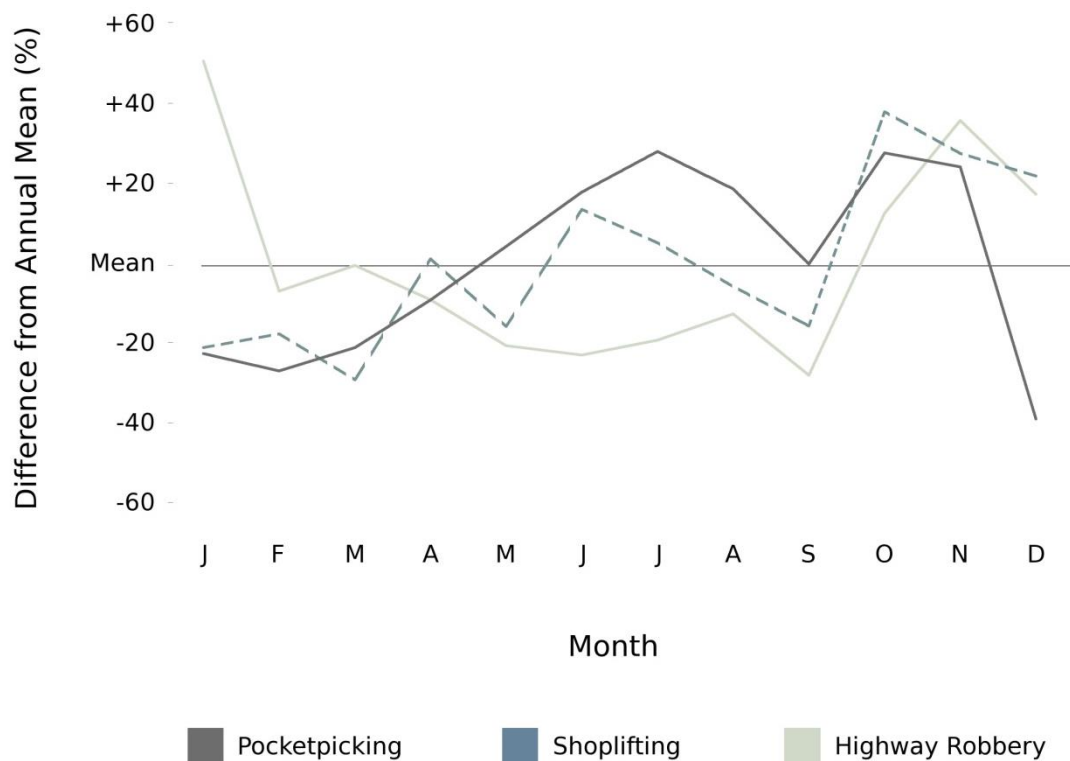
### ***The Nature of Irish Seasonal Crime***

Certain crimes were associated with certain times of year. For example, Harvey Osborne showed that poaching of fish peaked in the months of September to February. This increase correlated to the annual spawning cycle of salmon that left the sea and entered the river systems to lay their eggs at precisely this time. Poaching of birds too was heaviest in the autumn, which the author argued was a direct result of the fact that chicks took time to mature, meaning that there was very little to shoot until the autumn.<sup>14</sup> Other crimes were also affected by the seasons. In the warmer summer months, pickpockets took advantage of the fact that people were mingling outside in the streets, leading to obvious spikes in pocket picking offences reaching court (see Figure 7.2). On the other hand, in the winter the cold weather pushed people indoors, and the heavier clothing with its extra hiding places led to a rise in shoplifting. Highway robbery was most frequent in the late autumn and early winter, with the number of cases tumbling in the coldest months when presumably the roads themselves were less passable and therefore carried fewer targets worth accosting. By looking closely at the nature of Irish criminality and how the Irish differed from established patterns of seasonal crime, we can look for evidence to explain the seasonal prosecution trends.

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<sup>14</sup> Harvey Osborne, 'The Seasonality of Nineteenth-Century Poaching', *The Agricultural History Review*, 48 (2000), 28–36.





**Figure 7.2: Seasonality of pocket picking, shoplifting, and highway robbery.**

Seasonal prevalence of pocket picking, shoplifting, and highway robbery prosecutions at London's Old Bailey by month of crime (1801-1820). Values are adjusted for the number of days in each month, and are displayed as a percentage of the annual average.<sup>15</sup>

A closer look at the Irish shows that they do not follow the expected seasonal patterns for all classes of crime. Sometimes they do; for example, we would expect Irish pickpockets to be most active in the summer, since that is the trend we see in the wider population. And this is exactly what we find (see Figure 7.3).<sup>16</sup> Other classes of Irish crime, such as burglary also mirror the patterns seen in the non-Irish population. But that is not so for all crime types. Irish shoplifting peaks noticeably in June and again in November, instead of in the winter as is the case in the wider population. Irish highway robbery also includes a peak in the early summer, bucking the autumnal trend for that type of crime.

<sup>15</sup> Calculated with trial data obtained from the *OBPO*. Pocket picking n = 2,135; shoplifting n = 855; highway robbery n = 904.

<sup>16</sup> n-values for each category in the format [Irish value : non-Irish value]. Shoplifting [74 : 781], Bodily Harm [50 : 333], Highway Robbery [88 : 816], Pocket Picking [138 : 1,997], Burglary [82 : 1,292], All Crime [1,712 : 23,555]. Note that these categories exclude grand larceny, the biggest category of crime reported in the Old Bailey, so Figure 7.4 should not be read as an attempt to explain all variations.



**Figure 7.3: Seasonality by crime type.**

Irish and non-Irish (male and female) rates of crime by month, showing pocket picking, shoplifting, highway robbery, all classes of crimes causing bodily harm, burglary, and all crime.

Irish crimes involving bodily harm (most of it serious Irish-on-Irish crime) peak dramatically in the summer and are comparably non-existent in the spring. With the exception of the evidence related to Irish burglary, it would seem that the bulk of Irish activity in London was shifted towards the summer and autumn.

Figure 7.3 shows a selection of some of the more commonly prosecuted crimes. It excludes grand larceny, which was by far the largest category, and whose pattern mirrors very closely the 'all crime' pattern. If Irish crime was due to seasonal migration, we would expect it to be related to either inter-community conflict or subsistence crime, rather than organised criminality. That means that we can ignore those categories most often ascribed to prostitution or criminal gang activity (pickpocketing, and highway robbery) as it is less likely for short-term migrants with the intention and means to return to Ireland to find themselves caught up in this type of crime. The former, as popularly depicted by Charles Dickens in *Oliver Twist*, was often controlled by gang leaders who coerced people into the crime, or as Deirdre Palk notes, was committed by prostitutes.<sup>17</sup> The latter, at least in the case of the Irish, can be best explained by its link to demobilised soldiers and sailors, and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. By looking to determine if subsistence crime that is characteristic of short-term migration can explain this rise in Irish prosecutions during the summer and autumn we can test the likelihood that the phenomenon might be linked to seasonal migration.

A close look at that evidence seemingly refutes the link between seasonal migration and Irish crime. As can be seen in Figure 7.3, shoplifting stands out as particularly anomalous in the Irish population, with a large spike in the summer. In this case the large swings in the graph are largely down to the low number of entries (only 74), so must be viewed skeptically. Nearly all defendants were women who give us no reason to suspect that they were temporary, such as Margaret Bryan, who told the jury that 'I had a child in my arms when I went into this shop'. A young child would have made Bryan a much less likely candidate to

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<sup>17</sup> Deirdre Palk, 'Private Crime in Public and Private Places: Pickpockets and Shoplifters in London 1780-1823', in Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore (eds.), *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink* (London, 2003), 141.

become a seasonal migrant worker.<sup>18</sup> Otherwise, the defendants tended to be boys, mostly under the age of eighteen, such as twelve-year-old William Connor, convicted of stealing a coat in July 1812.<sup>19</sup> All but one of the Irish-named defendants accused during the summer months stole textiles or garments. Nothing about them suggests anything other than chance explaining the rise in their numbers.

Cases involving bodily harm (murder, homicide, infanticide, rape, assault, wounding) also showed a summer spike amongst the Irish. Like shoplifting, the number of cases is low – only 50 total. So again, this graph should be read with a healthy skepticism. Again it too suggests that for this class of crime, seasonal trends are not obviously the cause. Instead we see evidence of Irish on Irish inter-community violence, often resulting in death. This was the case in the death of Jeremiah Carthy who was killed by a group of four Irish men and women in 1820, after they had enticed Carthy into a fight to settle an unknown score.<sup>20</sup>

The only murder case involving an Irish individual that might pertain to seasonal violence is that of Irishman Edward Clifford by fellow-Irishman James Leary in July 1813. As in the death of Jeremiah Carthy, Clifford too was seemingly the victim of an Irishman with a score to settle. However, the trial account of Clifford's murder case details that he had been in London only five weeks or so at the time of the murder, after having arrived from Ireland with eleven pounds and two guineas in his pocket, which may have been the motive for his murder. It is unclear whether he intended to engage in a seasonal relationship with London, but his live-in partner, Mary Burke, noted that he 'said very often he wished to be in his own country'.<sup>21</sup> *The Times* corroborates Burke's account, with testimony from Clifford's friend, William Slattery, who noted that Clifford spoke no English,

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<sup>18</sup> 'July 1807, trial of Margaret Bryan (t18070701-19)', *OBPO*.

<sup>19</sup> 'September 1812, trial of William Connor (t18120916-22)', *OBPO*.

<sup>20</sup> 'September 1820, trial of Edward Callaghan, Mary Donovan, William Donovan, and Daniel Donovan (t18200918-29)', *OBPO*.

<sup>21</sup> 'September 1813, trial of James Leary (t18130915-3)', *OBPO*.

and that he 'often said, that London did not agree with him, and he would go to Ireland'.<sup>22</sup>

Clifford's case is interesting for the ambiguity concerning his return date. If indeed he did intend to return to Ireland for the winter, we have no idea how firm those plans were, or if there was a particular date he was waiting for before making his decision. This ambiguity may be a limit of the historical record, but it may also be evidence that many of these seasonal Irish workers intended to see how it went before committing to a return to Ireland. Without explicit evidence about their motives or their intentions, we can only speculate.

In this case, the temporary Clifford was the victim rather than the defendant. Clifford's case on its own is not enough to confirm the importance of an Irish seasonal relationship with crime. The balance of the evidence in these two categories of crime certainly seems to refute an Irish seasonal trend. Instead, the bulk of the Irish spike in crime is down to grand larceny cases, which were not notably summer or autumn crimes in the wider population; instead, they were dictated by patterns of need and focused in the winter months. If summer and autumn crimes are not to blame for the Irish crime wave, then the answer must lie elsewhere. Other forms of evidence suggest that strangers may have been increasingly to blame for crime during these warmer months, which can be best seen by exploring evidence of an Irish seasonal relationship with the capital.

### ***Irish Seasonal Migration***

According to the *Report of the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* (1816), there were 'probably 5,000 more Irish poor in London in the latter end of June, than there had been five weeks before'. When we note that the same report estimated the size of the Irish-born population in the city at roughly 14,000, this influx of 5,000 more individuals was dramatic.<sup>23</sup> The size of the culturally Irish population at this time remains unknown, with no one as yet

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<sup>22</sup> 'OLD BAILEY, Friday, Sept. 17.' *The Times* [London, England] 18 Sept. 1813: 2. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>23</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* (1816), 7.

offering a clear estimate. If the number of Irish-born was around 14,000, it should be safe to assume at least as many again had significant Irish roots or connections. This entry of Irish migrants maps well onto the increase in male Irish felony indictments.

For those historians who are uncomfortable relying on surname analysis as a basis for evidence of this seasonal trend, I can confirm that a similar (though statistically less reliable) trend appears in the distribution of the thirty geographic keywords related to Ireland that were tested in Chapter Four (Table 7.1). Words such as Irish, Ireland, and Dublin, appear more frequently in the trial accounts between May to October, than at other times of year. Those keywords are least frequent in early February (only 3 mentions), and most frequent in late September (19). That in itself is conclusive of nothing, but certainly supports the findings of the wider trend identified using surname analysis.

***Table 7.1: Number of Irish-related geographic keyword ‘hits’ by half-month, 1801-1820 (n = 263).***

Month	First-half	Second-half		Month	First-half	Second-half
January	7	8		July	16	18
February	3	5		August	18	11
March	8	11		September	7	19
April	9	10		October	14	10
May	17	14		November	7	11
June	12	9		December	10	9

Other institutions also show evidence of larger numbers of Irish in the area during the summer and autumn. Workhouse admittances, which tended to follow a similar seasonal pattern to crime (reflecting its connection to seasonal need), show a similarly distinct Irish-only trend in the early nineteenth century. Looking specifically at the records from St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Westminster paupers with Irish surnames show that in general, Irish use of the workhouse

was lower than we would expect during winter, and higher at just the moment outlined in the *Mendicity* report, as well as in the autumn.

This is noticeably distinct from the trend amongst those with non-Irish names, which show the effect of winter on those who turned to the parish for aid. During these two decades non-Irish admissions during the winter (January-April) were twenty-five per cent higher than they were during the autumn (September-December). This was despite the fewer number of days in February, which over two decades add up to more than a month's difference (Figure 7.4). Though dramatic, this seasonal impact on workhouse intakes was much lower than it had been just a few decades earlier. In the century between 1725 and 1824, the average intake of paupers at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in winter had been sixty per cent higher than in the autumn.<sup>24</sup> This lone workhouse was but one of the metropolis' eighty-six or so similar institutions, which Tim Hitchcock estimates housed roughly 15,000 inmates per year by 1750.<sup>25</sup> Evidence from Jeremy Boulton and Leonard Schwarz suggests that number may have doubled by 1815.<sup>26</sup> Though seasonality was not as harsh on the poor as it had once been, discernible trends in English pauperism over the course of the year can be observed as late as the early twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>

The workhouse was supposed to be a place where the 'deserving' poor of a parish could be housed, fed, and put to work. It was seen as an alternative to begging and handouts, but one that was questionably effective. Access to indoor poor relief, and therefore access to the workhouse, was limited to those who had settlement in the parish, which in most cases meant the permanent locals. This means the records from St. Martin-in-the-Fields are more representative of the seasonal needs of the local community. Yet many Irish individuals had settlement

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<sup>24</sup> January-April 1801-1820 (6,695 inmates) vs. September-December 1801-1820 (5,442 inmates). Source: I would like to thank Jeremy Boulton and Leonard Schwarz for permission to use the St. Martin-in-the-Field's workhouse data from the *Pauper Lives Project* (<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/pauperlives>).

<sup>25</sup> John Broad, 'Parish Economies of Welfare, 1650-1834', *The Historical Journal*, 42 (1999), 989.

<sup>26</sup> Based on annual change in admittances in St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse. Boulton and Schwarz, 'St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse data', *Pauper Lives Project* (2013).

<sup>27</sup> Nigel Goose, 'Farm Service, Seasonal Unemployment and Casual Labour in Mid Nineteenth-century England', *The Agricultural History Review*, 54 (2006), 290.



**Figure 7.4: Workhouse admittances in St. Martin-in-the-Fields.**

Irish and non-Irish inmates accepted per month into St. Martin-in-the-Fields Workhouse, 1801-1820, adjusted for number of days per month.<sup>28</sup>

in London parishes, gained through marriage, renting a house of a certain value, or through at least one year's continuous employment by a local. Ann Robinson, who was born in Dublin, gained a settlement in London when she and her husband had:

Rented and occupied a house in Arnolds Court Barbican in the Parish of St Botolph without Aldersgate in the city of London for upwards of Twenty months at the rent of ten guineas per annum.<sup>29</sup>

That was enough to secure her long-term support from the parish under the poor laws. This means that we must not discount the Irish amongst those collecting indoor relief.

<sup>28</sup> Derived from dataset: Boulton and Schwarz, 'St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse data'. Irish n = 1,100; non-Irish n = 18,059.

<sup>29</sup> LMA, P69/BOT1/B/042/MS01469/001, p. 156, 28 June 1812, 'Examination of Ann Robinson'.



As David Green noted, the Irish were also eligible for ‘casual relief’ from a parish’s overseers as long as they had spent the previous night there.<sup>30</sup> The daily disbursements of poor relief from St. Sepulchre parish in London suggest that the Irish were at times receiving this casual relief; however each entry is abrupt, often containing only a name, a date, and the amount of aid received.

Nevertheless, even within this one London parish there are a small number of names that stand out as particularly Irish. Amongst those are Dennis Donavan, who appears nineteen times between 23 April and 4 June 1817, receiving between 3*d.* and 6*d.* each day, before he disappears from the notebook.<sup>31</sup> That amounts to out-relief about once every other day during the period. This may be the same Dennis Donavan [sic] who was charged and convicted of petty theft on 23 September 1819, just a few miles down the road in Whitechapel; however, given the prevalence of his name, we cannot be certain.<sup>32</sup>

Donavan’s disappearance from the record in June may be evidence that he was able to secure temporary employment during the summer, and had used the out relief as a way of getting by during leaner times. It is possible that Donavan was a seasonal Irish migrant who had arrived a little too early to find a job. Many of those 5,000 extra migrants noted in the *Mendicity* report were hoping to work in casual seasonal positions in the capital, and to take up economic opportunities that were not available at home. The docks, warehouses, and shipyards of the East End offered informal opportunities for some. Andrew Conolly was described in 1814 as an ‘extra labourer’ by John Blenkarn, a wharfinger at Custom-house quay.<sup>33</sup> The following year, Thomas Kelly, a ‘temporary labourer’ was working for the East India Company’s warehouse in Coopers-row near the Tower of London, when he was arrested for theft.<sup>34</sup>

Others offered their labour as bricklayers, or canal and ditch diggers. Irish women and some Irish men came in search of domestic service positions, which

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<sup>30</sup> David Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Farnham, Surrey, 2010), 42.

<sup>31</sup> LMA, P69/SEP/B/052/MS03243/002, ‘Overseers daily disbursement of poor relief’, 1817.

<sup>32</sup> ‘October 1819, trial of Dennis Donovan (t18191027-103)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>33</sup> ‘November 1814, trial of Andrew Conolly (t18141130-33)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>34</sup> ‘February 1815, trial of Thomas Kelly (t18150215-20)’, *OBPO*.

were most abundant in the capital.<sup>35</sup> For some, the positions they secured were long (or at least medium) term. Irishman John Murphy had been working for a year and a half as a carter for a carpenter named Charles Pinsent, before falling afoul of his employer in 1805.<sup>36</sup> That was long enough for Murphy to claim legal settlement in London – not that it did him any good in Australia, where he was transported shortly thereafter.

Others arrived as sailors who worked the shipping lanes between London and the East Indies or the Americas. These sailors, who are discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter, arrived in reasonably predictable patterns that coincided with safer seas, avoiding dangerous winter swells on the Atlantic, and taking advantage of the switch in the direction of the prevailing winds on the Indian Ocean between the dry and monsoon seasons. Even would-be Irish lawyers had to spend at least two years training at one of London's Inns of Court in order to be qualified to practice law in Ireland.<sup>37</sup>

Many positions were more fleeting still, and migrants learned to take advantage of any opportunity. Daniel Delworth, who had migrated to London from Ireland, was described in 1806 by a friend as 'a labourer to any job that he can get'.<sup>38</sup> Workers looking for employ apparently did not find it unusual for a stranger to offer even a few hours' work, unsolicited while walking down the street. At least that was the case for Charles O'Connor, who had just arrived in the area from a stint in the East Indies in 1802. O'Connor claimed to have been minding his own business on the roads outside of London, when an individual offered him some money to drive what turned out to be stolen sheep from Kingston to Westminster.<sup>39</sup> O'Connor did not find the offer unusual, suggesting the casual nature of the request was common and welcome for men in his position. A few years later in 1808, the recently arrived John Casey asked a man that he thought was a baker 'if he could direct a stranger to where he could get employ'. Casey

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<sup>35</sup> Paula Humfrey, *The Experience of Domestic Service for Women in Early Modern London* (Farnham, 2011), 11-15.

<sup>36</sup> 'April 1805, trial of John Murphy and George Harrison (t18050424-120)', *OBPO*.

<sup>37</sup> Bailey, *Irish London*.

<sup>38</sup> 'December 1806, trial of Daniel Delworth (t18061203-41)', *OBPO*.

<sup>39</sup> 'October 1802, trial of Charles O'Connor (t18021027-90)', *OBPO*.

was offered a one-off job on the spot, carrying the basket of bread the man had with him. For Casey, presenting himself as available for work was natural, and in this case successful – until he found out that the basket of bread had been stolen.<sup>40</sup> His remuneration turned out to be a month's confinement in Newgate and a whipping, but his opportunistic exchange with the man he had thought was a baker illustrates the nature of casual hiring in the capital.

One of the biggest employers of Irish seasonal migrants was agriculture, and Irish participation in this line of work is well documented and is one of the important reasons London's Irish population swelled each summer and autumn. Many Irish men in particular had long been and were increasingly spending their summers and autumns in Britain working as for-hire labourers on farms, as did some Irish women.<sup>41</sup> The Irish term for these country labourers was 'Spalpeens', and these employment opportunities were crucial for Irish families in the nineteenth century, but they were also vital for English farmers in desperate need of extra labour during the summer and harvest seasons. Though unpopular with English labourers who saw the Irish as competitors, the Irish seasonal migrants were so important to English agriculture that when they failed to show up in 1828, and again when their numbers began to drop in the 1850s, farmers expressed fear that they would be unable to bring in the harvest before winter.<sup>42</sup> Farms in the English southeast in particular had a greater need for farm labourers than the local area could provide.<sup>43</sup>

London was not so much the destination for many of these transient agricultural migrants, as the meeting point. Showing up unannounced in a field or knocking on farmers' doors is a risky way to secure employment. Some transient workers arranged their employment by letter before arriving, but most were not so

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<sup>40</sup> 'November 1808, trial of John Casey (t18081130-52)', *OBPO*.

<sup>41</sup> Nicola Verdon, 'The Rural Labour Market in the Early Nineteenth Century: Women's and Children's Employment, Family Income, and the 1834 Poor Law Report', *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 55 (2002), 299–323.

<sup>42</sup> E.J.T. Collins, 'Harvest Technology and Labour Supply in Britain, 1790-1870', *The Economic History Review*, 22 (1969), 472.

<sup>43</sup> Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration', 365-380.

organised.<sup>44</sup> A late start to the growing season, or an influx of competing labourers to the same region might leave one stranded without work, food, or shelter. Norma Landau's research on the impact of the laws of settlement on rural areas suggested that Irish transient workers were unlikely to find much sympathy if found in such a situation.<sup>45</sup> These farmhands were also expected to come with their own tools, and many arrived from Ireland with a spade slung over their shoulder, or a reaping hook in hand.<sup>46</sup> For those in need of provisioning themselves with the tools of the trade, or who needed repairs to existing tools, London provided innumerable opportunities.

The logistics of getting hired also made London an attractive place to start one's summer journey. In the north and in Scotland, farmers took on their seasonal workers at regional hiring fairs. In the southeast, teams organised their labour in the capital and often advertised their availability on market days around the region.<sup>47</sup> To increase the chances of stable employment, workers formed gangs under a leader whose role was to secure jobs for the team.<sup>48</sup> The logistics of early nineteenth-century travel and communication meant that putting together such gangs was much easier if would-be workers milled about a favourite pub in London, waiting for word from friends about employment opportunities.<sup>49</sup> These local knowledge networks in London meant news of a delayed harvest in Kent, or an early one in Sussex, could be acted upon quickly. This allowed workers to be strategic about where they sought their employment. London is perfectly placed within the southeast for a transient worker, as the city is ringed on all sides by counties bursting with arable farmland and potential jobs. Someone who based themselves in London could therefore take advantage of opportunities in Essex in the east or in Buckinghamshire in the west, without much added difficulty.

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<sup>44</sup> Anne O'Dowd, *Spalpeens and Tattie Hokers: History and Folklore of the Irish Migratory Agricultural Worker in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin, 1991), 103.

<sup>45</sup> Norma Landau, 'The Regulation of Immigration, Economic Structures and Definitions of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century England', *The Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 541–571. See also a spirited refutation by K.D.M. Snell, 'Pauper Settlement and the Right to Poor Relief in England and Wales', *Continuity and Change*, 6 (1991), 375–415.

<sup>46</sup> E.J.T. Collins, 'Migrant Labour in British Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 29 (1976), 58.

<sup>47</sup> O'Dowd, *Spalpeens and Tattie Hokers*, 103.

<sup>48</sup> Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration', 379.

<sup>49</sup> Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London*, 39; Harris, *The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland*, 22.

People were willing to travel long distances to take up the chance for work. Mrs. Burton testified in June 1814 that two men had stolen the possessions of 'a lodger of mine that was sixty miles in the country'.<sup>50</sup> Sixty miles from London encompasses the territory between Oxford in the west and Canterbury in the east – an impressive range that demonstrates the distances that London-based labourers were willing to travel for these temporary roles. The settlement examination of Irish widow Kitty Burne shows that the Irish too travelled widely to take up these employment opportunities. Kitty's 1815 examination notes that she and her husband had lived in Hereford, Roscommon, Kent, and London before she fell on hard times.<sup>51</sup>

This need for extra labour on the farms of the southeast was driven by technological changes that affected only part of the agricultural year. Sowing and harvesting techniques had changed very little since the sixteenth century; bringing in the corn and hay primarily involved hand tools such as a sickle or a reap-hook that were still used by the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> After the harvest, wheat had to be separated from the chaff using a process known as threshing or thrashing, which involved beating the stalks with flails. This was traditionally a winter activity, which could be done after all the other chores had been completed on the farm, before the growing season began the following year. The manual nature of planting, harvesting, and threshing had provided year-round employment for farm workers.

By the late eighteenth century, a new device known as the 'threshing machine' began to appear on the nation's farms, which mechanised this last process. These horse-powered machines severed the straw from the heads of the wheat. Once severed, the machine passed the heads through a series of screens to separate the wheat from the chaff. The process still required farmers to manually feed the stalks into the machine, and to remove both the straw and grain once it had passed through the device. However, a small team could now complete work that

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<sup>50</sup> 'July 1814, trial of John Hyland and Henry Madden (t18140706-124)', *OBPO*.

<sup>51</sup> LMA, *Examination of Paupers 1815-28, St. Botolph Aldersgate*, P69/BOT2/B/043/MS02665/001, Settlement Examination of Kitty Burne, 19 August 1815.

<sup>52</sup> Collins, 'Harvest Technology', 456.

had formerly been incredibly laborious. This changed the dynamics of farm employment, leading to a stable need for workers during the summer and autumn, but no such need in the winter. After a few decades, this mechanisation would lead to machine breaking and unrest amongst frustrated workers during the Swing Riots of 1830.<sup>53</sup> In the interim however, it opened a market for transient labourers who travelled the countryside looking for casual work on the nation's farms.

The Irish men were quick to offer their services. Not only was Ireland predominantly a rural society at this time, meaning the men had the skills and experience to make themselves useful on a farm, but a number of migratory push factors meant the extra income was vital to an Irish family's prosperity.<sup>54</sup> Many Irish families found themselves farming shrinking plots of land. This was a byproduct of repeatedly subdividing leases. Multi-generational leases were common in Ireland. This meant that when the leaseholder died, the property was typically split between the surviving sons. Frances Morehouse gives an example of the impact of subdivision: a property leased for three lives to a single tenant in 1793 in Upper Tulla in county Clare, was home to 96 families when the lease expired in 1847.<sup>55</sup> As the farms got smaller, life became more difficult. The problem was particularly acute in the west of Ireland where the quality of the land was poor to begin with and subdivision was common.<sup>56</sup> These small plots of land meant farmers needed to ensure high yields, which led to the rise of the potato as the nation's preferred crop. The potato required relatively little tending between the time it was planted in February, and the time it was harvested late in November.<sup>57</sup> Families quickly realised that women and children could manage the fields while the potatoes were growing. This meant many of these Irish men found themselves available for additional summer work. Many took this freedom as an opportunity to earn more money for the family. Some

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<sup>53</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (London, 1970); Katrina Navickas, 'Captain Swing in the North: The Carlisle Riots of 1830', *History Workshop Journal*, 71 (2011), 5–7.

<sup>54</sup> Harris, *The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Frances Morehouse, 'The Irish Migration of the 'Forties', *The American Historical Review*, 33 (1928), 580.

<sup>56</sup> Eric L. Almquist, 'Pre-Famine Ireland and the Theory of European Proto-Industrialization: Evidence from the 1841 Census', *The Journal of Economic History*, 39 (1979), 715.

<sup>57</sup> Harris, *The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland*, 13.

travelled to neighbouring counties to work on the large farms owned by Irish Protestant families. Some were lucky enough to find work close to home.<sup>58</sup> But many had to look further afield.

As an added incentive for tenants to seek paid employment, Irish landlords demanded cash rents, but the Irish economy provided few opportunities to generate this cash.<sup>59</sup> Irish absentee landlords were sometimes chastised for their perceived negative influence on their tenants and their lack of charity towards them, despite the patience and obedience of the Irish themselves:

How many of the poor Irish are compelled to emigrate to this country by the want of employment at home which is produced by absentee landlords? ...The Irish poor have indeed at present this additional recommendation to beneficence and attention, that they have borne the pressure of distress with patience and resignation – that they have not been found directly or indirectly concerned in any of those inflammatory proceedings which have lately disturbed the metropolis.<sup>60</sup>

In this environment, Irish men set off towards England and Scotland, to serve as temporary labourers to raise enough money to support their families. Once the harvest in Britain was over, most of these men returned home to Ireland to visit with their relatives, pay the rent, and share whatever money was left over. Those who preferred urban life had the option of seeking work in the many temporary London jobs mentioned above, but could still partake in this cyclical migratory pattern each year.

Seasonal migration was certainly not a new concept in the nineteenth century; nor was it unique to Britain.<sup>61</sup> L.R. Poos demonstrated the longevity of seasonal agricultural workers, who were common in Britain even during the late Middle Ages, and E.J.T. Collins highlighted special provisions in the laws of settlement

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<sup>58</sup> J.H. Johnson, 'Harvest Migration from Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 41 (1967), 102.

<sup>59</sup> Harris, *The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland*, 60.

<sup>60</sup> *The Morning Chronicle*. 6 December 1816, Issue 14851, BL Newspapers, II.

<sup>61</sup> D.J. Siddle, 'Migration as a Strategy of Accumulation: Social and Economic Change in Eighteenth-Century Savoy', *The Economic History Review*, 50 (1997), 1–20; Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, 'The Foundation of the Modern Economy: Agriculture and the Costs of Labor in the United States and England, 1800–60', *The American Historical Review*, 85 (1980), 1055–1094.

that had allowed seasonal agricultural migration since the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>62</sup> It was also an important source of employment for the Scottish Highlanders, who came down each spring to offer their services on Lowland farms.<sup>63</sup> And often overlooked are the English in this trade. When Middlesex-born William Herbert was accused of burglary in London in July 1802, he testified: 'I am a labouring man, Griffiths [his co-accused] and I was going into the country to harvestwork'.<sup>64</sup> Collins emphasised that these Englishmen were a major source of transient labour, offering their labour to farmers with work to be done.<sup>65</sup>

The scale of the Irish seasonal migration is difficult to measure. Barbara Kerr estimated the flow was nearly non-existent before the nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> However, the *Dublin Weekly Journal* suggested otherwise, noting a much earlier start date for the practice amongst the Irish. In 1728 the paper commented that 'the number of Irish labourers that are to be seen in the neighbourhood of London, who are come over for harvest-work, is plain proof of the poverty of their country'.<sup>67</sup> Bishop Berkeley of Cloyne, writing in 1735 agreed. The Bishop expressed concerns about the impact of the seasonal exodus on Ireland, suggesting it was shortsighted to let so many labourers till the fields of England when Ireland's own land was left uncultivated.<sup>68</sup> By 1748, the people of Holyhead off the northwest coast of Wales estimated as many as 700 Irish harvest migrants passed through the area on their way back to Ireland.<sup>69</sup> The figures for Holyhead represent the experience of only one port, not to mention the points of arrival at Bristol, Glasgow, and Liverpool.

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<sup>62</sup> L.R. Poos, 'The Rural Population of Essex in the Later Middle Ages', *The Economic History Review*, 38 (1985), 515–530; E.J.T. Collins, 'Migrant Labour in British Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 29 (1976), 38.

<sup>63</sup> T.M. Devine, 'Highland Migration to Lowland Scotland, 1760-1860', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 62 (1983), 147–148.

<sup>64</sup> 'September 1802, trial of William Herbert, John Reynolds, James Peach, Francis Riley, Charles Smith, John Roberts, Edward Griffiths, Elizabeth Lane, Elizabeth Ealey (t18020918-70)', *OBPO*.

<sup>65</sup> Collins, 'Harvest Technology', 465.

<sup>66</sup> Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration', 365–380.

<sup>67</sup> F. Elrington Ball, 'Irish Harvestmen in England', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 32 (1902), 187.

<sup>68</sup> See queries 243-247: George Berkeley, *The Querist* [1735] (Project Gutenberg: 2009). Ebook #4543. (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4543/4543-h/4543-h.htm>) accessed 9 August 2013.

<sup>69</sup> Ball, 'Irish Harvestmen in England'.



Apart from the London-based figure of '5,000 more Irish poor' that appeared by the end of June, as presented in the *Report on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis*, we have no reliable counts of the scale of this migration in the early nineteenth century. We know that after 1816, when steam shipping first made travel between Ireland and Britain reliable, the flow of seasonal migrants increased, suggesting that an annual total of 5,000 might be too low for the post-Napoleonic era.<sup>70</sup> These same steamers made it possible for Irish labourers to reach the Scottish hiring fairs in less time than the Highlanders, where they fought to out-compete their rivals.<sup>71</sup> The first semi-reliable counts we have are from 1841, at which point Kerr believes there were roughly 57,000 Irish seasonal migrants in Britain.<sup>72</sup> Cormac Ó Gráda has since suggested that number is far too low.<sup>73</sup> There is a clear correlation between the arrival of these seasonal workers in London and a rise in prosecutions, but do the accounts suggest a causal link between the two?

Arthur Redford noted that each winter after the hop harvest was in on the surrounding farms, East Ham just over the border from London in Essex suffered from an influx of Irish paupers, many of whom undoubtedly continued on to the urban parishes of the capital.<sup>74</sup> London was therefore a meeting place for the Irish at least twice a year: on their way outwards towards the farms (or urban jobs), and on their way homewards, back to the west. It is easy to see why people may have returned to London after the harvest to look for work. Certainly the city offered more opportunities for winter employment – even casual employment – than did a tiny rural village. However, purely from experience these workers must have known a winter in London would be difficult. Writing of seasonal agricultural workers in America during the nineteenth century, Horace Greeley gave a rather uncomplimentary assessment of these transients who arrived in urban centres after the harvest, marking these men out as fools

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<sup>70</sup> Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Seasonal Migration and Post-Famine Adjustment in the West of Ireland', *Studia Hibernica*, 13 (1973), 50–51.

<sup>71</sup> T.M. Devine, 'Migration and the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 32 (1979), 347.

<sup>72</sup> Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration', 372.

<sup>73</sup> Ó Gráda, 'Seasonal Migration', 49.

<sup>74</sup> Redford, *Labour Migration*, 139.

destined to suffer. Greeley noted that these workers arrived in the towns and cities

under a vague, mistaken impression that there must be work at some rate where so much is being done and so many require service, and squander their means and damage their morals in a fruitless quest of what is not there to be had. When Spring at length arrives, they sneak back to the rural districts, ragged, penniless, debauched, often diseased, and everyway deteriorated by the Winter plunge.<sup>75</sup>

What Greeley overlooked is that cities offered companionship for strangers in ways that the countryside could not. While some of these migrant workers undoubtedly were after jobs in London, we know many intended to press onwards towards Ireland, so it would seem that the Irish communities and the chance to have some fun in the capital before going home, as much as the promise of further employment, may have drawn these scattered workers back into the metropolis each autumn.

However, direct evidence of temporary agricultural workers in the trial accounts is slight. The trial records include approximately two-dozen explicit examples of Irish defendants involved in the seasonal agricultural trade. The examples span the two decades under review, and include sixty-year-old Michael Lahey, who had been a haymaker on a farm near Hendon for a fortnight, before he was charged with stealing a greatcoat on a chilly morning in September 1802.<sup>76</sup> Nearly two decades later, also in Hendon, and well north of the boundaries of London's urban sprawl, James Sullivan was arrested for stealing lead with his friend William Sheen in the autumn of 1819, while 'looking for work'.<sup>77</sup> Charles O'Connor, mentioned above, who was tricked into driving stolen sheep to Westminster had been 'going out into the country, to look for work' when he was offered his ill-fated job, making it clear that his journey involved a starting point

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<sup>75</sup> Horace Greeley, *What I know of Farming: A Series of Brief and Plain Expositions of Practical Agriculture as an Art Based upon Science* (New York, 1871), 303.

<sup>76</sup> 'October 1802, trial of Michael Lahey (t18021027-50)', *OBPO*; W. Cary, 'Meteorological Diary for September 1802', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 92 (1802), 794.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.30000080774759>

<sup>77</sup> 'October 1819, trial of William Sheen and James Sullivan (t18191027-130)', *OBPO*.

in London.<sup>78</sup> The accounts also give some evidence of returning workers getting into trouble. In August 1804, William Hill, Charles Connelly, and John Lacey were accused of housebreaking and were arrested in Brentford, just to the north of Kew, in what is now London's western suburbs, looking for their way across the fields and back to town.<sup>79</sup> These handful of examples are hardly enough to suggest that returning agricultural workers can be blamed for the one-sixth jump in Irish prosecutions in the autumn. The figures here suggest only 1.5 per cent of the crime can be thus explained.

Part of the reason for that may have to do with men like Peter Foy, who had arrived in London from Ireland five years before, and testified in October 1806, 'I work in the country in harvest time, and in winter I buy skins, and deal in hair'.<sup>80</sup> Many of these workers took whatever work they could find, on farms or otherwise. Some dug ditches or helped build roads one day, and helped harvest crops the next.<sup>81</sup> Just as the accounts fail to provide enough detail to identify the Irish consistently, they also fail to identify seasonal agricultural labourers, because by the time an individual was back in London, they were no longer a farmhand. Listing all of a defendant's jobs – particularly for those who worked as day labourers – may not have been relevant to the court or considered a good use of space in the accounts by the editors. What were relevant were the details of the alleged crime. The impermanence of employment opportunities therefore means that finding Irish individuals involved in this seasonal trade is challenging.

This is despite the 'occupation' XML tag available via the online version of the *OBP*. This tag offers occupational data, available for approximately thirteen per cent of entries. When a defendant's occupation is listed, the victim or another witness usually describes it, rather than the defendant him or herself. It is quite common for this victim to be an employer, identifying for the court that the defendant was in his or her employ at the time of the incident, such as in the case of James Morris, the servant of baker William Hill, who charged his employee

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<sup>78</sup> 'Trial of Charles O'Connor (t18021027-90)'.

<sup>79</sup> 'September 1804, trial of William Hill, Charles Connelly, and John Lacey (t18040912-3)', *OBPO*.

<sup>80</sup> 'October 1803, trial of John Johnson and Thomas Barnes (t18031026-45)', *OBPO*.

<sup>81</sup> Devine, 'Migration and the Scottish Highlands', 148.

with stealing a basket from the shop in 1801.<sup>82</sup> Other times the defendant's occupation comes from a witness identifying the defendant as someone known to them, as did Charles Lucas, swearing to the identity of his drayman Stephen Bartlet, accused of stealing a cask of beer from a publican named James Hyde in 1803.<sup>83</sup>

Despite the limits of the XML tags, they do indirectly support the hypothesis that the trends in Irish crime are caused by seasonal migrants (both urban and rural). The defendant rarely mentions his or her own occupation. Instead, they typically used what few column inches that were afforded to them by the publisher of the *Proceedings*, to beg for mercy from the court, (as did James Morris in 1801) or to call a witness to attest to their character (as did Stephen Bartlet in 1803). This phenomenon of non-defendants identifying the defendant's position is either a relic of publishing decisions made when producing the records we have today, or it is a sign that the court tended to prefer evidence to come from more trustworthy lips. These types of crimes between individuals known to one another are comparatively rare, however. Instead the majority of trials do not contain information on the defendant's occupation. That does not mean all of these 'unknowns' are strangers, but given the way occupations are reported in the records, we would certainly expect strangers to appear in this unknown group.

When we look at the distribution of 'unknowns' across the seasons, it follows the same patterns as prosecutions more generally: highest in autumn for the Irish men (+27 per cent), and highest in winter for the non-Irish men (+2.5 per cent). By comparison, the mention of a victim's occupation in cases involving an Irish male defendant – usually a sign of a local with a clear vested interest in the community – is much higher in autumn (205) than in winter (158), with summer comfortably in between (177). In particular, clashes with artisans, labourers, and people of status – lords, dukes, the King, people who label themselves Esq. – all rise noticeably during the autumn.

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<sup>82</sup> 'June 1802, trial of James Morris (t18020602-16)', *OBPO*.

<sup>83</sup> 'February 1803, trial of Stephen Bartlet (t18030216-72)', *OBPO*.

Proxy evidence that non-locals are to blame for the shift in prosecution rates is also available through an analysis of character witnesses. One of the ways to determine if a defendant had ties to the local area is to look for evidence that someone testified to his 'good character'. As a phrase, 'a good character' is very useful for identifying this type of defense. It is incredibly unlikely to return a false positive, since that combination of words is rarely if ever used for any other purpose in the corpus. It is also used almost systematically for this purpose between 1801 and 1812 by the authors of the *Proceedings*. The evidence available in the *OBP* is heavily coloured by the scribes and editors who created it. Between 1801 and 1820, there were four different scribes working under three different editors.<sup>84</sup> As both Robert Shoemaker and I have independently noted elsewhere, these scribes and editors had a significant impact on the words used to describe trials.<sup>85</sup> After 1812, 'a good character' is no longer used with regularity, but prior to this it proves a useful proxy for defendants with friends who might come to his defense.

In the non-Irish male population between 1801 and 1812, the phrase appears in the trial accounts of approximately 26 per cent of defendants – a proportion that stays remarkably stable across the year. There are of course ebbs and flows to that trend, with some years slightly higher than others; however, the consistency is notable given the number of individuals involved. The Irish men show a very different trend. In the winter (January-April), they seem to have more friends than even the non-Irish, with nearly 32 per cent of trial accounts containing the phrase. However that drops by more than half to 14 per cent in summer (May-August), and is well below the non-Irish average in autumn (September-December) at 21 per cent. That means Irish male defendants in the summer and autumn have notably fewer people willing to pledge to their good character, and those arrested for crimes in the winter have notably more such friends. This evidence strongly suggests that the Irish defendants charged in the winter belong to a more permanent population in the city, with friends, relatives, and

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<sup>84</sup> Magnus Huber, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings'.

<sup>85</sup> Shoemaker, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings', 559-580; Adam Crymble, 'Whose Lexicon? The Impact of Reporters and Editors on the Old Bailey Proceedings', *Thoughts on Public & Digital History*, (9 January 2013) <http://adamcrymble.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/whose-lexicon-impact-of-reporters-and.html>.

employers who they can call upon to support them in front of the jury. However that is not so during periods when we would expect temporary or seasonal workers to be in town.

Mentions of Irish strangers also increase in the summer and autumn. John Isaacs, who lost a bushel of oats in August 1811 to John Kelly, noted that ‘the prisoner was a stranger to me’.<sup>86</sup> We also see a number of defendants themselves noting that they are new to the area, such as James Coyle, who noted to the court in June 1815 that ‘I am quite a stranger in London, I have not been here ten days’.<sup>87</sup> Other keywords such as ‘lodger’, which often refers to less established people, and ‘fortnight’, often used to denote how long someone had been in town or in the employ of a master – both peak noticeably in autumn amongst trials involving Irish male defendants. Without explicitly saying as much, the accounts suggest unknown Irish men are finding themselves in conflicts with locals in greater numbers during the autumn than in the winter, adding weight to the claim that seasonal workers are involved, even if we cannot identify them on an individual basis. Whatever the exact number, these transient Irish workers were arriving in England by the turn of the nineteenth century, particularly in the southeast, and that twice-annual arrival on the way to and from the farm fields, or merely inwards en route to summer jobs in the capital, was having an impact on the Anglo-Irish relationship on the streets of London.

Arriving in the metropolis also meant interacting with the locals. Barbara Kerr noted that Irish agricultural workers could spend the whole summer in English fields whilst scarcely encountering an Englishman.<sup>88</sup> In July 1804, Thomas Nicholl, an agricultural labourer, lodging in a barn near the fields where he worked, testified that ‘the Irishmen live in one barn and the English live in the other’, suggesting deep divisions even amongst these groups of labourers.<sup>89</sup> When they arrived back in London they certainly did begin to bump into the English. Many of these temporary labourers found their way by drawing upon

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<sup>86</sup> ‘September 1811, trial of John Kelly (t18110918-168)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>87</sup> ‘June 1815, trial of John Addison and James Coyle (t18150621-49)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>88</sup> Kerr, ‘Irish Seasonal Migration’, 379.

<sup>89</sup> ‘July 1804, trial of Thomas Riley (t18040704-7)’, *OBPO*.

the many Irish networks in the city. But for the non-Irish and the permanent population, these people were strangers. And they had not been invited.

### ***Conflict Resolution and Strangers***

Not everyone who arrived from Ireland had been able to find camaraderie amongst their fellow Irish. Henry Brown, who was charged with uttering a forged bank note in 1820, threw himself upon the mercy of the jury, noting 'My friends all live in Ireland'.<sup>90</sup> This was not an uncommon plea by emotionally defeated Irish defendants; Sarah Holmes was charged with grand larceny for stealing a pair of shoes, and proclaimed to the court that she, being born in Dublin 'had no friend but God in this country'.<sup>91</sup>

The Irish communities made it easy for English locals to regard the Irish as a competing or at least a distinct group, rather than members of their own neighbourhoods with whom they shared common interests. Known Irish businesses or meeting points such as pubs frequented by the Irish could become targets for the ire of the English locals.<sup>92</sup> By regarding the Irish as 'others' it may have become easier for the English to stereotype the individual members based on ideas about the collective, which may have been entirely incorrect when applied to an individual. It was therefore possible to say *he is Irish. He is not like me*.

Strangers also may not have known the law. There is some evidence of sympathy for newcomers' lack of understanding of English law. Sailor John Cotter, who struggled with the English language, accused of robbing his sleeping fellow shipmate, was recommended to mercy by the jury in September 1807 'on account of his being a stranger, and not knowing the laws of the country'.<sup>93</sup> Yet for most Irish defendants there was little likelihood that they could plead

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<sup>90</sup> 'May 1820, trial of Henry Brown (t18200517-65)', *OBPO*.

<sup>91</sup> 'October 1812, trial of Sarah Holmes (t18121028-113)', *OBPO*.

<sup>92</sup> Peter Clark, 'Migrants in the City: The Process of Social Adaptation in English Towns 1500-1800', in Peter Clark and David Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (Totowa, New Jersey, 1987), 274-275.

<sup>93</sup> 'September 1807, trial of John Cotter (t18070916-120)', *OBPO*.

ignorance that an act had been illegal. Their presence in the area does however change the dynamics of established conflict resolution strategies. Every community has its own way of dealing with conflict. Under English law, victims had a number of choices for how to deal with a problem involving another individual. If someone found himself or herself the victim of a crime and could identify a culprit, that victim had to choose if he or she was going to prosecute the accused or if they would opt for a local solution. It was stressful for victims to pursue a solution that was fraught with uncertainty and that escalated rather than diffused the conflict, so it seems most people did opt for the local solution. With an ever-shifting population of one million people interacting with each other every day and only 25,000 defendants appearing in the Old Bailey courthouse over the course of these two decades, it is clear that most disputes were being resolved quietly.

There are a number of situations in which community resolutions worked well, or were the only solution. Often disputes do not involve crimes, but are instead perceived insults. Irish aristocrat Robert D'Esterre lost his life in a duel with Irish reformer Daniel O'Connell in 1815 because D'Esterre felt compelled to defend the honour of his friends against a perceived insult. Though illegal, D'Esterre knew that O'Connell was honour-bound to accept the challenge because of the social expectations of a man of his class. The men resorted to their own form of community resolution, and D'Esterre died of his wounds.<sup>94</sup>

In certain circles of the male world, dueling, or violence in general, was still considered a socially acceptable (or tolerated) community resolution. For men of a lower social station, fisticuffs were a not-uncommon means of settling disputes. Men fighting had ideas of what constituted a 'fair and honest fight', and the fighters were often encouraged by onlookers to stick to this code, which allowed one party to submit to the other to end a fight. Unfortunately these fail-safes did

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<sup>94</sup> John Gideon Millingen, *The History of Duelling: Including Narratives of the Remarkable Personal Encounters That Have Taken Place from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, Vol. 2 (1841), 210–217.



not always save the lives of those involved, but they were part of the culture of dispute resolution.<sup>95</sup>

These aggressive solutions worked when the parties were of the same gender and social class. But a poor man could not challenge an aristocrat to a duel. And it would not have been considered appropriate for a merchant to settle his dispute with a shoplifter through a bare-knuckle boxing match. That is not to say no merchants found themselves wrestling with a thief; such incidents were all too frequent, but they were usually an attempt to detain the thief so that the law could be enforced rather than a means of settling the dispute itself. Class boundaries therefore posed at least some limit on whether or not a community resolution would be appropriate or effective. The greater the class difference between the victim and the accused, the less likely the two would be able to come to terms without the aid of an outside body such as the law or without one side swallowing his or her pride. As these transient workers and members of these Irish communities were overwhelmingly of the labouring classes, disputes between them and employers, artisans, shopkeepers or the gentry were predisposed to end in a trial in a way that they might not have if both parties were poor.

Not all community resolutions were violent. Many involved discussions of varying degrees of civility, and were a chance for the two parties to come together and solve their differences informally. Often this was done with the help of a parish clergyman or respected member of the community who could act as a mediator. As John Beattie noted, this could be simply a matter of an apology, a promise to return stolen items, or a financial penalty paid to the victim in lieu of prosecution.<sup>96</sup> The latter was itself a misdemeanour under common law, known as compounding a felony. Nevertheless, compounding a felony was not uncommon and is even recorded in some trials; bigamist Charles Dubordieux offered to pay his new (and illegal) wife, Elizabeth Simpson, a pension if her

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<sup>95</sup> For examples see shaking hands: 'April 1828, trial of John Hanson (t18280410-42).' *OBPO*. Also one party going and staying down: 'September 1824, trial of Henry Nairey (t18240916-49)' and 'September 1787, trial of James Weston (t17870912-96)', *OBPO*.

<sup>96</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, 8.

family did not prosecute him.<sup>97</sup> Dubordieux's offer of compensation was an attempt to bargain for his freedom. When the case did end in a trial, these attempts at bargaining are evidence of failed endeavors by a defendant to reach a community resolution.<sup>98</sup> Successful bartering rarely leaves a paper trail. Community resolutions were an option with obvious benefits; when successful, the issue was resolved efficiently for the victim and the accused retained his or her liberty.

However, this form of neighbourhood justice works best when the victim has a preexisting relationship with the accused (and/or mediator) and a stable address. If you believe that your favourite butcher around the corner has given you a bad shilling as change, you can seek redress because you know who he is and where you can find him. Chances are you both know a third party who could act as a mediator in the discussion. It may be an awkward confrontation, but it is one you *can* pursue in the morning. You may in fact allow the butcher to offer you a different coin and an apology.

If either that element of a preexisting relationship, or the knowledge of where to find the person is not present, then the victim has fewer options and must act with greater desperation if any redress is to be had. This explains why cases involving fellow lodgers in temporary accommodation are so common. The case of Irish-born Margaret Sullivan is a good example. On the morning of the twelfth of January 1803, Sullivan rose early from the bed she had shared with an out of work servant named Mary Drisdale, got dressed, grabbed her roommates' gown off the bed, and quietly snuck out. From their accommodation in the parish of St. Andrew Holborn on the north edge of urban London, she walked south for nearly a mile into the City, entered the pawnshop of Mr. Clement and sold the dress for 10 shillings. Depending on her walking pace, it likely took Sullivan between ten and twenty minutes to reach the shop, and along the way she was forced to make several turns. Her actions were thus quite deliberate. When she arrived, the

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<sup>97</sup> 'September 1801, trial of Charles Dubordieux (t18010916-26)', *OBPO*.

<sup>98</sup> For example, see the trial transcript of Mary Smith, who pocket picked John Solomons but when he caught her and took his money from her, she pleaded to be let go as he had what he had lost. 'December 1802, trial of Mary Smith (t18021201-63)', *OBPO*.

clerks knew her well, and it is entirely probable that Drisdale was not her first victim. Then, Sullivan tried to disappear.

Her attempt to disappear failed. The next month, she was on trial in the Old Bailey, charged formally with grand larceny. Sullivan 's defense was to accuse Drisdale of lying that the garment had been stolen, insisting that she had been given permission to pawn the dress since she had fallen on hard times, and had intended to repay the debt. This in itself was not implausible, but Drisdale denied the claim. The fact that Sullivan had opted for a pawnshop relatively far away and that she failed to return to their abode, undoubtedly raised suspicions. The jury sided with the prosecutrix; Margaret Sullivan was found guilty of grand larceny and sentenced to one year imprisonment in the House of Correction.<sup>99</sup> When Drisdale first noticed that she had been robbed, she had been unaware of where she might find Sullivan and so turned to the community for help finding the dress. A tip from a Mrs. Shirley who guessed correctly (or knew) the name of the pawnshop, allowed Drisdale to recover the garment. Ultimately Drisdale decided that the conniving nature of the sleight against her meant Sullivan deserved a criminal prosecution; while the pair were not strangers to each other, the defendant had broken the bond of trust between them by absconding.

Those utterers of false bank notes discussed in the previous chapter also broke that bond of trust when they gave false addresses to the shopkeepers who accepted their bogus money. So too did those who attempted to run when confronted, or who travelled to a distant shop to conduct nefarious business rather than defrauding a shop in a neighbourhood in which someone might recognise them. London was an easy place for someone to disappear, and the level of anonymity that the city offered meant people had to be on their guard with strangers who had wronged them. Strangers can disappear amidst London's many dark and winding streets. Transient and Irish strangers come with an added risk, as they could jump on the next ship and forever be gone from Britain. Culprits jumping ship was a serious concern for victims. In 1804, Jonathan Trott testified that he had been warned by an informant 'if I did not make haste [the

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<sup>99</sup> 'February 1803, trial of Margaret Sullivan (t18030216-34)', *OBPO*.

defendant] would be gone to sea', which prompted an immediate search by Trott.<sup>100</sup> The problem was not limited to ship traffic. In 1803, Michael Carney, having worked temporarily in the countryside and finding himself in trouble, was accused by the prosecution of having 'absconded from justice in the country' by coming back to London.<sup>101</sup> Carney was eventually brought to justice, but others certainly were not. Given the cyclical nature of Irish migration in the city, the locals might have been even more wary in the autumn than at other times of year.

The literature on strangers generally is relatively sparse; however the literature on merchant sailors, another temporary group who joined and rejoined society with the changing seasons, is much more developed and shows remarkably similar patterns of conflict with the local population. The temporary nature of merchant sailors led to a response from the locals that was consistent with a rapid need to escalate or resolve disputes with people you might not see again. Sailors' relationship with the city involved an arrival, a brief interaction with the citizens, some friends and enemies made, some money spent, and then departure – sometimes forever. This relationship with the city was very similar to that of the seasonal agricultural or construction workers who spent their winters in Ireland.

Jesse Lemisch described the stereotypical 'Jack Tar' – so named for the tar-soaked trousers he wore on board the ship to keep dry – as a young man with a reputation for living in the present.<sup>102</sup> Jack Tar was therefore much the same as the young, able-bodied harvesters. Once ashore, these sailors were treated like twenty-first century tourists. The locals knew they had money to spend and that they would not necessarily be around for long. That led some to do their best to

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<sup>100</sup> 'July 1804, trial of John Needs and Thomas Dorset (t18040704-36)', *OBPO*.

<sup>101</sup> 'September 1803, trial of Michael Carney (t18030914-90)', *OBPO*.

<sup>102</sup> Jesse Lemisch, 'Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 25 (1968), 371–372.

fleece sailors in unfair games of chance, or to ply them with liquor and leave them robbed and alone.<sup>103</sup>

Many unscrupulous scoundrels got away with such ill treatment of their temporary guests, since once a sailor had weighed anchor and returned to sea, he was unable to testify against a defendant in court. The Irish too experienced similar examples of this abuse. People who had just arrived in town from Ireland, who did not have connections to the Irish communities, often found themselves the victims of opportunistic locals who took advantage of the new arrival's naivety. Peter King recounts the fortunes of a poor Irishman who was convinced by his new coworkers that he had the right to sell the leftover scraps of silver from their day at work and buy everyone ale. When he did so, those same coworkers turned him over to the law for theft.<sup>104</sup>

There are also examples of similar abuse of strangers and newcomers in the wider community. Strangers were rightly wary of those who knew the town better than they. In 1803, Margaret Patterson told three unknown men who knocked on her door offering ham for sale that 'I was a stranger, and was afraid to buy them, for fear they should be stolen'.<sup>105</sup> Patterson's suspicion was correct, and though she may have been new to town, she was not nearly as new as John Hounslow, a straw plait dealer who had arrived in London only the night before, when three fellow lodgers took the opportunity to relieve him of his money while he slept.<sup>106</sup> Abuse of newcomers also came from officials. A poor Irish woman who peddled cheap fish on Oxford Street was apparently targeted repeatedly by officers, while other problems were ignored by the same officer. The incident prompted a reader of the *Morning Chronicle* to write a letter of complaint on behalf of the Irish vendor.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> For example, see the treatment of Antonio Bennis or the Danish sailor Peter Nordbeck: 'October 1812, trial of Charles Carlisle (t18121028-52)', and 'February 1801, trial of Catherine Warren and Jane Stanley (t18010218-68)', *OBPO*.

<sup>104</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 401.

<sup>105</sup> 'January 1803, trial of Richard Hafford, John Connor, William Mines, Benjamin James (t18030112-54)', *OBPO*.

<sup>106</sup> 'June 1815, trial of Jane Nelson, Maria Johnson, and John Leary (t18150621-72)', *OBPO*.

<sup>107</sup> 'The Beadle's Crusade Against the Barrow Woman!' *The Morning Post*, 10 November 1813, Issue 13355, *BL Newspapers*, II.

But ill-use often goes both ways. Sailors and temporary people had a reputation for ill-using the locals. Women were left pregnant or diseased, fights broke out, and as Peter Linebaugh's work on the eighteenth century shows, a sharp spike in capital offences corresponded directly with the seasonal arrival of the East and West Indian fleets.<sup>108</sup> We see the same types of conflicts arising when the Irish appear in London beginning in the summer. The three defendants who robbed Hounslow (above) of his wages had been Irish speakers, perhaps having been in town only slightly longer than their victim.

We do not have records of the crimes that did not go to trial. Instead, we have evidence that arriving strangers meant a heavy workload for the magistrates. As with the Irish seasonal migrants, the sailors were strangers, and their future address could not be assured. This meant that those who found themselves a victim of a sailor or a migrant worker had to act swiftly in case he or she left the next morning. This lack of time to resolve the issue meant community resolutions were challenging, and victims may therefore have turned to the law for redress. What the law did with these strangers is itself quite interesting and unexpected. It got rid of them. And as it happens, it did the same with the Irish.

The English had no official policy or strategy for 'dealing with' Irish migrants. From time to time charities pleaded with the people to offer assistance for the Irish poor.<sup>109</sup> Parliamentary committees occasionally attempted to come up with ideas. However, nothing on the books suggested Irish defendants should be treated any differently than anyone else when it came to criminal law. Peter King's recent works even suggests the Irish were not treated differently by the courts.<sup>110</sup> The English did however have a cultural tradition of 'dealing with' strangers by forcing them to leave.

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<sup>108</sup> Nigel Worden, 'Strangers Ashore: Sailor Identity and Social Conflict in Mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century Cape Town' *Kronos*, 33 (2007), 72-83; Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 131.

<sup>109</sup> "The Irish Poor in St. Giles's", *The Morning Chronicle*, 17 February 1816, Issue 14600, BL Newspapers II.

<sup>110</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice'.

This strategy of removing the unwanted had roots in the poor laws and laws of settlement, which punished those from afar by restricting access to parish resources. There was some degree of sympathy for the 'distressed state of the poor Irish', but according to the law, most Irish men and women had no claim to indoor parochial relief.<sup>111</sup> Coupled with the vagrancy laws, the parish had the right to remove unwanted paupers who tried to claim poor relief, assuming he or she had no legal settlement in the area. There was good reason for getting rid of strangers: they were expensive. In 1796, the parishes of St. Giles and St. George Bloomsbury paid out £2,000 in relief to about 1,200 Irish natives.<sup>112</sup> To avoid these costs, London parishes paid to have paupers hauled what seem like preposterously short distances across a parish line in order to relieve themselves of any financial obligation towards that person. Nothing at all would have prevented the offender from returning across the road, but the concept of removal was so strong in the capital that it was seen as a solution. In 1816 the *Report on Mendicity* suggested the best solution for dealing with the Irish was to find a way to send them home:

Means may certainly be provided for passing these unfortunate people to the Ports above-mentioned, from whence it would be very easy to convey them to Ireland. And as many of them, who came here in expectation of employment, are, from a disappointment in that, in a state of the utmost wretchedness and misery; it would perhaps not be very difficult to prevail with a large proportion to return, if assistance should be afforded to enable them to do so, and some pains taken to explain to them how they might be able to get home.<sup>113</sup>

Not all Irish individuals welcomed removal. A sailor named John Lewis was arrested and charged with begging in 1819; Lewis insisted he was from Halifax, Yorkshire, but under oath admitted he was a Dublin native. In an account of the latest Middlesex Sessions in *the Morning Post*, the reporter complained of Lewis's lie about his place of settlement, calling it:

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<sup>111</sup> 'Distressed State of the Poor Irish' *The Morning Post*, January 31, 1814, Issue 13425, BL Newspapers II.

<sup>112</sup> Redford, *Labour Migration*, 134.

<sup>113</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis*, 15.

A sort of defence which has lately become very prevalent amongst the Scotch and Irish poor, who, dreading the idea of being sent home poor and wretched, generally claim some of the British settlements to which the poor laws do not extend, in hopes of escaping with seven days' imprisonment.<sup>114</sup>

While unpopular with many Irish, the same strategy of removal was used by the courts to remove criminals from the area, though this may not have been a conscious policy. Transportation had been used throughout the eighteenth century and by the nineteenth century the destination for transported criminals was Australia, where they would be sent for sentences of seven years, fourteen years, or life. Returning from transportation before the end of the sentence came with a penalty of death. Magistrates and juries who condemned these people to the journey expected most of the convicts would never see England, let alone London, again.

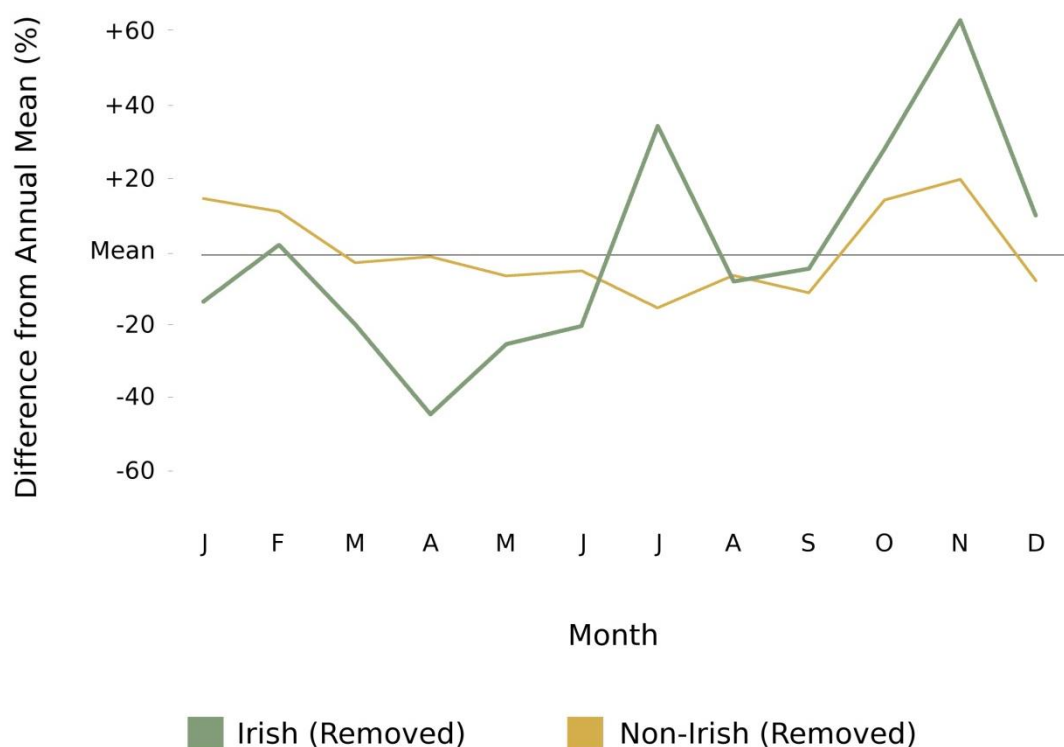
Criminals could quickly become reoffenders when they were released from gaol. Those convicts who were transported may have reoffended, but if they did so it was unlikely to occur in London. For a Londoner, that was a good result. The Bank of England actively sought transportation as the punishment for those involved in crimes against the currency, as it was seen as a way to remove the offender and reduce the risk of having to pay for another prosecution in the future. Another permanent solution was death. Peter Linebaugh's book, *The London Hanged*, suggested death was usually handed down as a sentence to outsiders, with only 38.9 per cent of those hanged in the capital between 1703 and 1772 originally hailing from London. The Irish and English from beyond London comprised the bulk of the remaining condemned (48.3 per cent). Of those Irish in Linebaugh's study, just over one third had an itinerant occupation as a 'country labourer', a sailor, or a soldier.<sup>115</sup> This suggests serious conflicts in the eighteenth century disproportionately involved strangers to the city.

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<sup>114</sup> 'Middlesex Sessions' *The Morning Post*, 30 October 1819, Issue 15220, BL Newspapers, II.

<sup>115</sup> Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 93–95.





**Figure 7.5: Sentences of removal or death based on date of crime.**

Proportion of male defendants given sentences that removed them from the community (transportation or death), Old Bailey 1801-1820, corrected for length of month.

Together, transportation and death sentences provide a useful way to determine if the Irish were being affected by seasonal punishment strategies designed to remove them from London. When we look at these punishment trends over the year, the result for the Irish males (Figure 7.5) is strikingly similar to the pattern of the proclivity of Irish male crime (Figure 7.1). That is: we seek spikes in punishments for Irish male defendants that result in that individual being permanently removed from London at the same times of year that we see an influx of Irish seasonal workers. The non-Irish males also show a slight increase in this type of punishment in the autumn months, again supporting the idea that it is these strangers who are leading to conflicts that end in a criminal trial. It would seem that the strategy for dealing with criminal strangers was very much the same as it was for dealing with poor strangers: make them someone else's problem. Conversely, in the late winter and early spring when Irish crime (and the Irish population in the city) was at its lowest, a far higher proportion of

guilty men receive punishments that allow them to remain in the capital, either after a period in gaol, corporal punishment, or a fine. This correlation suggests the population that over-wintered in London may have been treated differently when it came to punishments than the transient population.

Of course, these conclusions do not hold up on an individual level. It is easy to find specific examples of Irish people in London who break the mould. Margaret Sullivan, the woman described above who was gaoled for stealing and pawning her fellow lodger's gown, was arrested at least once more for a nearly identical crime with a nearly identical excuse, almost immediately after being released from prison.<sup>116</sup> One might have thought that as a repeat offender, Sullivan was the perfect candidate to be sent far away. Nevertheless, despite discrepancies in individual cases, all of the evidence together points to the conclusion that when large numbers of temporary workers arrived in London both on their way to and on their way back from seasonal work, the local population had a short temper. When things did go wrong at these times of year, it would seem the locals were more likely to resort to the law, and the law was more likely to opt for a punishment that removed the offender permanently from the community.

Many of these temporary migrants of course gave the locals every reason to be annoyed at their presence. Many were in fact guilty of their crimes, and treated the city and its citizens poorly. Arthur Redford notes that some of these Irish waywards boasted of being able to abuse the laws of settlement to get free rides around the country on the vagrancy system, costing the ratepayers unnecessarily.<sup>117</sup> Even the wealthy Irish could be unkind to their London hosts. Craig Bailey's work shows that Irish law students in the eighteenth century at Middle Temple routinely left without paying their fees in full, and when confronted about the debts simply denied they existed or flatly refused to pay them.<sup>118</sup> While this involved only a handful of individuals, it is this type of activity that quickly contributed to damaging a national reputation.

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<sup>116</sup> 'February 1803, trial of Margaret Sullivan (t18030216-34)' and 'January 1805, trial of Margaret Sullivan (t18050109-29)', *OBPO*.

<sup>117</sup> Redford, *Labour Migration*, 95.

<sup>118</sup> Bailey, *Irish London*, 58.

## ***Conclusion***

A seasonal swelling of the Irish population in summer and autumn is confirmed by the *Mendicity* report of 1816; however, the direct effects of that migration on crime reporting are more difficult to measure – especially through a traditional close reading. The distant reading visible in Figure 7.1 certainly suggests a strong correlation between the two, but our inability to consistently identify the temporary people in trial accounts may leave an element of doubt. Instead of outright refuting the idea of seasonal crime, the trial accounts tend to remain fairly silent. A close reading of trial accounts certainly makes it difficult to explicitly link agricultural workers in particular to the autumnal spike. Changes in certain classes of crime such as Irish shoplifting definitely appear to be down to chance rather than seasonality. However, especially common crimes such as grand larceny are more difficult to read on the matter. Irish named individuals are challenging to link to other records such as settlement examinations or genealogical resources, because they tend to share a small number of very common names (Dennis Donavan, for example). It is easy to find isolated examples of cases that support a level of seasonal crime, but not enough to explain the roughly one-sixth rise that we see from the distant reading.

The best evidence that we have for the connection between crime and Irish seasonality is in the form of proxy evidence, largely gleaned through additional distant readings. For example, the similar trend in Irish-named people entering the workhouse at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, a decline in summer and autumnal character witnesses for the Irish, a reduction in defendants with known occupations at the same points, a rise in words such as ‘lodger’, ‘stranger’, and ‘fortnight’ when we would expect Irish migrants in town, and a higher rate of sentences that remove people from the community at the same times of year, all point to a probable link to temporary people. None of these forms of evidence on their own are conclusive, but together they start to build a much more convincing case of the effects of seasonal migration on criminal prosecution

patterns. These add up to what John Burrows allegedly referred to as a 'multiplicity of weak markers'.<sup>119</sup>

For historians interested in this effect on the criminal justice system, these results are perhaps a compromise between what we would like to use in terms of evidence, and what is available. These peaks in prosecutions represent a small difference, measuring between fifteen and twenty-five per cent of all Irish crime. We might like to know exactly which fifteen to twenty-five per cent of cases are involved in that trend, but the surviving evidence just does not offer that granularity of detail. Yet, I believe these weak markers, combined with the more explicit cases described above, do point to an important seasonal trend that sheds light on a part of the Irish experience in London that is difficult to see without adopting at least some distant reading. This difficulty may explain why we have seen so little historiographical work to date on the phenomenon in the early nineteenth century.

The many Irish communities and networks in London described in Chapter Two made it possible for seasonal Irish outsiders to move to the city without the pressure to integrate with the English population. That is not to say there was no permanence to the Irish in the city. J.H. Johnson argued we should not view this seasonal movement of the Irish as one of vagrants shifting into England, but as a regular and planned routine that led to semi-permanent settlement for many migrants in the nineteenth century.<sup>120</sup> For the large number of temporary workers who arrived each year to work in seasonal trades, these established networks provided friendly faces that other smaller groups such as the Italians in London had to do without.<sup>121</sup>

Thousands of these temporary workers used London as a base rather than as a home. They came and went, following employment opportunities when they

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<sup>119</sup> Willard McCarty, 'a useful phrase, but by whom?', *Humanist Discussion Group*, vol. 25, no. 160 (12 July 2011) <http://lists.digitalhumanities.org/pipermail/humanist/2011-July/009127.html>

<sup>120</sup> Johnson, 'Harvest Migration', 97.

<sup>121</sup> Giorgio Riello, 'A Taste of Italy: Italian Businesses and the Culinary Delicacies of Georgian London', *The London Journal*, 31 (2006), 201–222.

were available, but it would seem that the fleeting relationship so many of these people had with the city and its inhabitants led to increased opportunities for conflict. And when the temporary population was at its peak, corresponding spikes in prosecutions appear in the Old Bailey records. Conflicts involving Irish accused are highest in the summer and the autumn, and much lower during the winter. This is the opposite of the seasonal patterns of crime seen in the wider population, in which crime rates are highest in the cold winter months when employment opportunities were scarcer and life more difficult.

Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter refute the idea that assimilation and integration should necessarily be the end goal of migrants.<sup>122</sup> And while I will not contest their claim, I will say that a failure (or refusal) to integrate seems quite clearly to have been a point of contention between migrants and the local population. The consequences of that tension can be seen in the form of increased poverty and crime at certain points of the year, and a higher degree of prosecution against migrants than against the wider population. For the Irish transients, their networks and communities in London facilitated temporary migration and created the conditions for conflict at certain times of year. Thousands of these Irish may have lived in London, but many of them did not think of it, nor necessarily treat it as home. And that was a recipe for a clash with those who had not invited them, but who were forced to share the streets nonetheless.

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<sup>122</sup> Mary J. Hickman and Bronwen Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain', *Feminist Review*, 50 (1995), 5.

## 8. Extraordinary Circumstances

Late on the evening of the 21 June 1815 a letter arrived in London from the Duke of Wellington. The following day it was published in the *London Gazette*, the official publication of the nation. Not one for headlines or emotional outpourings, the Duke carefully described the encounter at Waterloo against the French, waiting three full pages to announce that he had, in fact, defeated Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>1</sup>

Wellington perhaps, had cause to be reserved. The purpose of his letter was not to elicit celebrations in Britain; it was a letter to the King, expressing his condolences for the loss of so many great men who had died on the battlefield. Waterloo was not the end of the war, but it was the turning point from which Bonaparte soon realised there was no way back. Less than a month later, on 15 July 1815, the French leader turned himself in on board the *Bellerophon*, a British ship of the line. News of the surrender reached London a week later and was published on page three of *the Morning Chronicle*, well below the advertisements for 'Cheap Wine and Spirits' and all manner of things listed for sale.<sup>2</sup> *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* found space for the announcement on page sixteen.<sup>3</sup> Despite a lack of exaltation in the press, this final defeat of Napoleon was an extraordinary moment, and the subsequent peace had a dramatic impact on life in Britain, as peace always did.

1815 was not the only coming of peace in the early nineteenth century. The final defeat of Napoleon marked the third Anglo-French peace since 1793, each of which had its own impact on British society; these were:

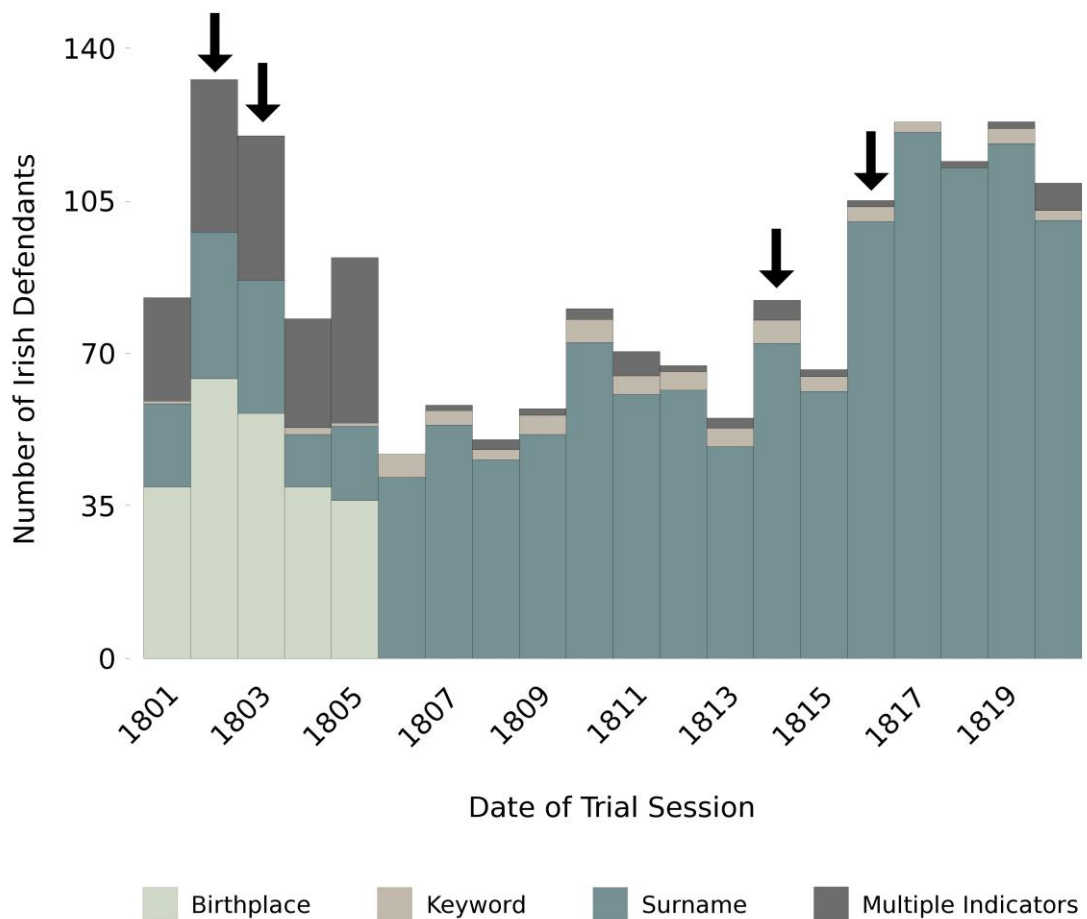
1. *The Treaty of Amiens*, March 1802
2. *The First Treaty of Paris*, May 1814
3. *The Second Treaty of Paris*, November 1815

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<sup>1</sup> 'Extraordinary' *The London Gazette*. 22 June 1815.

<sup>2</sup> *The Morning Chronicle*, 22 July 1815, Issue 14420, BL Newspapers, II.

<sup>3</sup> *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 22 July 1815, BL Newspapers, II, 95.



**Figure 8.1: Irish defendants per year.**

Irish defendants identified in the Old Bailey Proceedings, 1801-1820, with years of demobilisation marked by arrows.

The first was a short-lived, one-year respite signed in 1802 as the *Treaty of Amiens*. That treaty brought to an end the decade-long French Revolutionary war. The second, also short-lived, was a partial peace that came in 1814 with the surrender of the French leader in April of that year. After his surrender, Napoleon was imprisoned on the island of Elba, but soon escaped and led his last charge, which became known as the ‘Hundred Days’, culminating in his defeat at Waterloo in 1815. Within a few months of each of these declarations of peace, Irish prosecution rates spike in the Old Bailey (see arrows on Figure 8.1). This is an incredibly simple distant reading focused on the annual tallies of court cases, and will provide a useful test case for the limits of a distant reading approach. Like the seasonal trends discussed in the previous chapter, these spikes are reasonably mild, representing a few handfuls of extra cases than we would expect when viewed in the longer context of the other years of the period. Years

of peace are certainly not the only fluctuations, but the correlation between an increase and Irish defendants and the coming of peace is strong enough to warrant a closer look.

Of course, demobilisation is not the only plausible explanation for these changes in criminal reporting; changes in the cost of living can also lead to considerable community tension and a rise in subsistence crime. The early nineteenth century also experienced a number of periods of high prices caused by crop failures.

1. *The Crop Failures of 1800-1801*
2. *The 'Year without a Summer' in 1816-1817*

Food prices in the early nineteenth century were notably volatile; Brian Fagan pegs some of this to particularly harsh weather between 1805 and 1820.<sup>4</sup> Fagan argued that the early nineteenth century was part of a longer cycle known as the 'Little Ice Age', which had started in the fourteenth century after a late medieval warming that allowed the Norse to thrive on the northern fringes of Europe. Reduced opportunities for trade, particularly during Napoleon's Continental blockade of 1806-1814 put pressure on food prices in Britain. Wheat prices in Middlesex County peaked in 1800-1801, before declining. They again rose fairly sharply between 1809-1812 (mirrored fairly closely to a slight rise in Irish crime reporting in Figure 8.1), and after plummeting, spiked again in 1816 (see Figure 8.2).<sup>5</sup>

The Little Ice Age was certainly a factor; however, a volcano in Indonesia had perhaps the biggest impact on British food supply. Mount Tambora erupted in April of 1815, spewing so much ash into the atmosphere that crops in Europe and North America failed in 1816 and again the following year.<sup>6</sup> That year, the

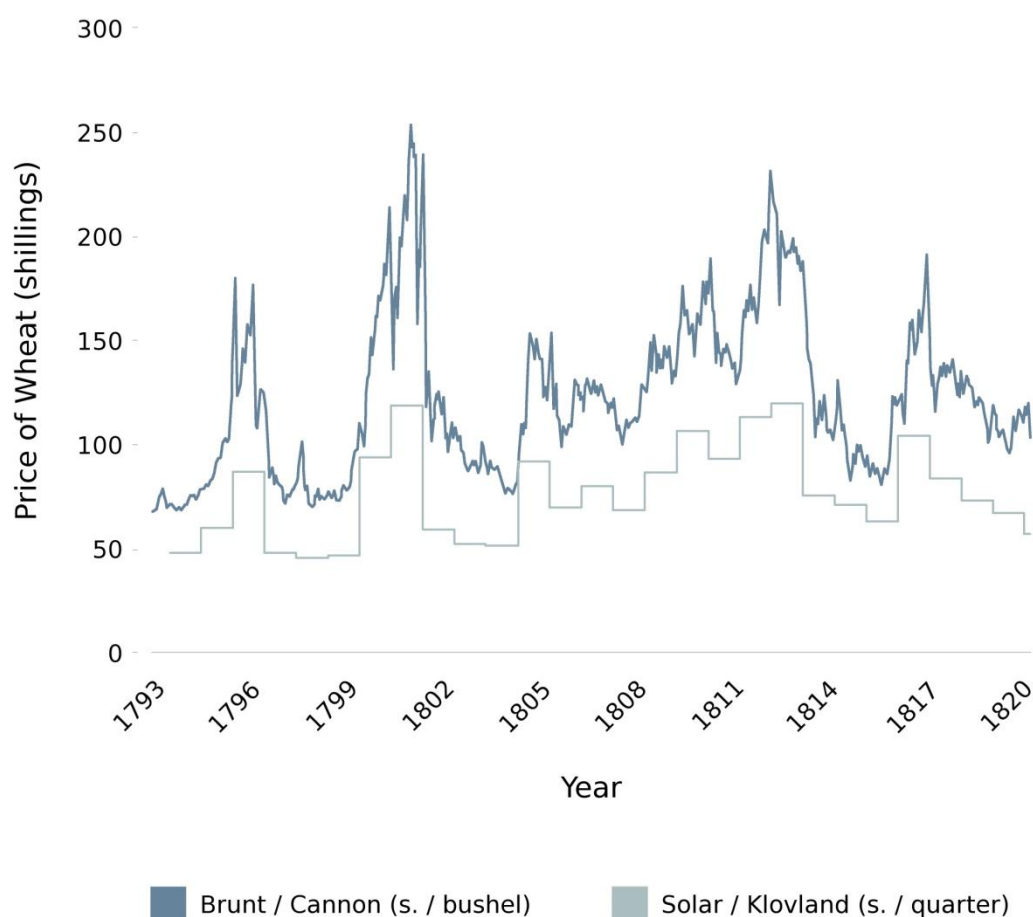
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<sup>4</sup> Brian Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300-1850* (New York, 2000), 171-179.

<sup>5</sup> Brunt and Cannon, 'English Corn Returns', 318-339.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Stommel and Elizabeth Stommel, *Volcano Weather: The Story of 1816, the Year without a Summer* (Newport, R.I., 1983).





**Figure 8.2: Price of wheat in Middlesex, 1793-1820.<sup>7</sup>**

harvest in Kent ended more than a month late, on 13 October.<sup>8</sup> As a result, grain prices nearly doubled in 1816, compounding the suffering of many unable to support themselves.<sup>9</sup> The eruption led to 1816 becoming known as ‘the year without a summer’. The name was coined to reflect the unseasonably cool temperatures, and even snowstorms experienced in parts of the northern hemisphere generally unaccustomed to summer blizzards. This chapter seeks to determine the effects of both demobilisation and high prices, to explore how they affected the Irish in London in ways that were the same as and different from the wider population. This will involve looking closely at the timing of prosecutions to the timing of demobilisation and high prices, and will also involve a close look

<sup>7</sup> Brunt and Cannon, ‘English Corn Returns’, 318-339; Peter M. Solar and Jan Tore Klovland, ‘New Series for Agricultural Prices in London, 1770-1914’, *The Economic History Review*, 64 (2011), 72–87.

<sup>8</sup> Fagan, *The Little Ice Age*, 170–171.

<sup>9</sup> Based on the price of wheat, oats, and barley, as extracted from: Solar and Klovland, ‘New Series for Agricultural Prices in London’.

at the trial accounts to consider the nature of the crimes being committed. I will look at all three periods of peace, but will focus primarily on the months surrounding the Peace of Amiens in 1802-1803 because of the wealth of surviving evidence from the period, as well as the possibility of linking defendants to the *Middlesex Criminal Registers*, and thus test the merits of the distant reading.

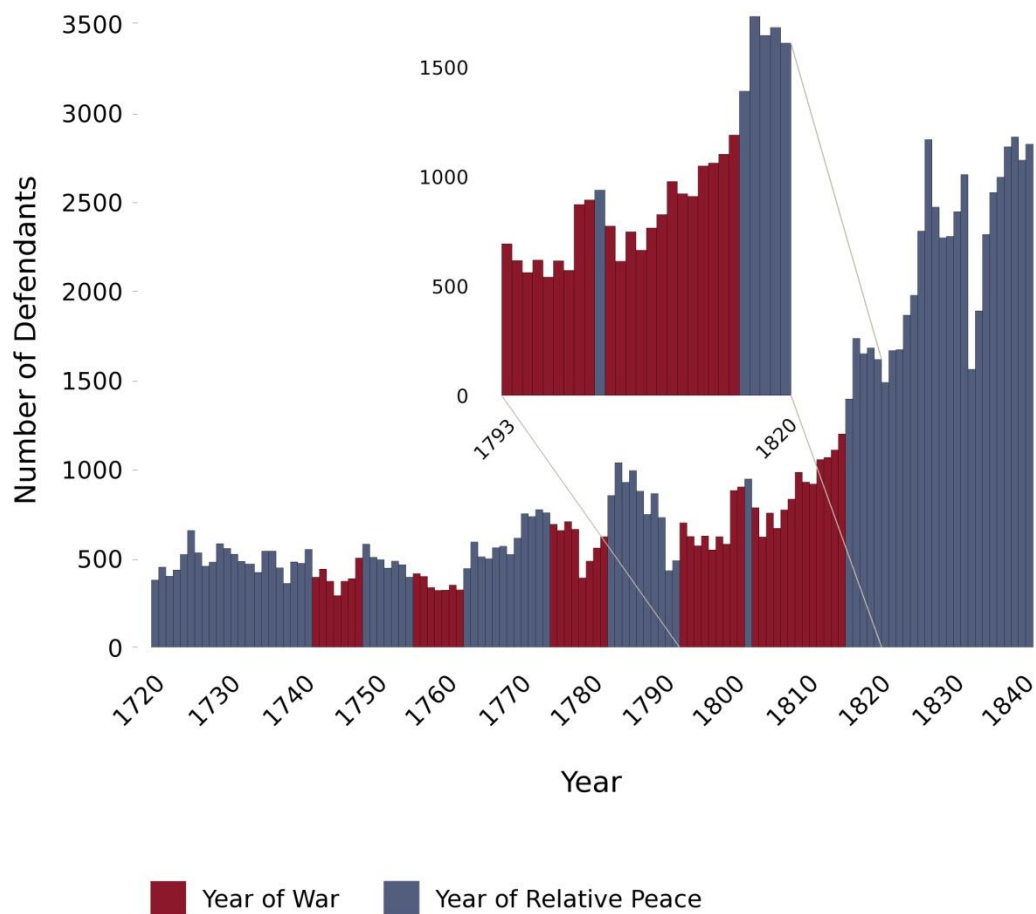
The historiography on the matter notes that peace with France did not generally bring the calm or prosperity to Britain that one might have hoped. Instead, during the years immediately following the end of wars, more Londoners found themselves struggling than ever before. Historians have, for decades, been aware of a connection between peace and increased community conflict. John Beattie's 1974 study of Surrey and Sussex demonstrated links between rising reports of crime and the coming of peace throughout the eighteenth century. Beattie's study noted in particular that the urban part of Surrey, more specifically the London suburb of Southwark, was particularly vulnerable to post-war crime – much more so than rural Surrey or Sussex.<sup>10</sup> This suggests that London was left with more than its share of demobilised soldiers and sailors at the end of the war. Long-term records of felonious crime in London, as seen through the *Old Bailey Proceedings*, support the conclusions of Beattie. For all major wars between 1720 and 1841, there was a rise in prosecutions in the years immediately following a return to peace, as can be seen in Figures 8.3 and 8.4.

This chapter will focus on the two classes of felonious crime depicted in the figures below: those primarily involving thefts, and those primarily involving violence.<sup>11</sup> Theft and violence leave different traces for historians. Theft is generally related to someone seeking personal monetary gain. It can be a sign of

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<sup>10</sup> Beattie, 'The Pattern of Crime in England', 94.

<sup>11</sup> Crimes were classified using the XML tags of the *OBPO* project. Defendants accused of the following sixteen crimes (as designated by the relevant XML tags) were counted as 'theft' cases: *animalTheft*, *burglary*, *embezzlement*, *extortion*, *gameLawOffences*, *grandLarceny*, *housebreaking*, *mail*, *other [theft]*, *pettyLarceny*, *pocketpicking*, *receiving [stolen goods]*, *shoplifting*, *simpleLarceny*, *stealingFromMaster*, and *theftFromPlace*. Violence cases were those with one of the following nineteen XML tags: *assault*, *other [breakingPeace]*, *riot*, *threateningBehaviour*, *wounding*, *arson*, *other [damage]*, *infanticide*, *manslaughter*, *murder*, *other [kill]*, *pettyTreason*, *assaultWithIntent*, *assaultWithSodomiticalIntent*, *indecentAssault*, *other [sexual]*, *rape*, *highwayRobbery*, *robbery*. For



**Figure 8.3: Theft-related offenders.**

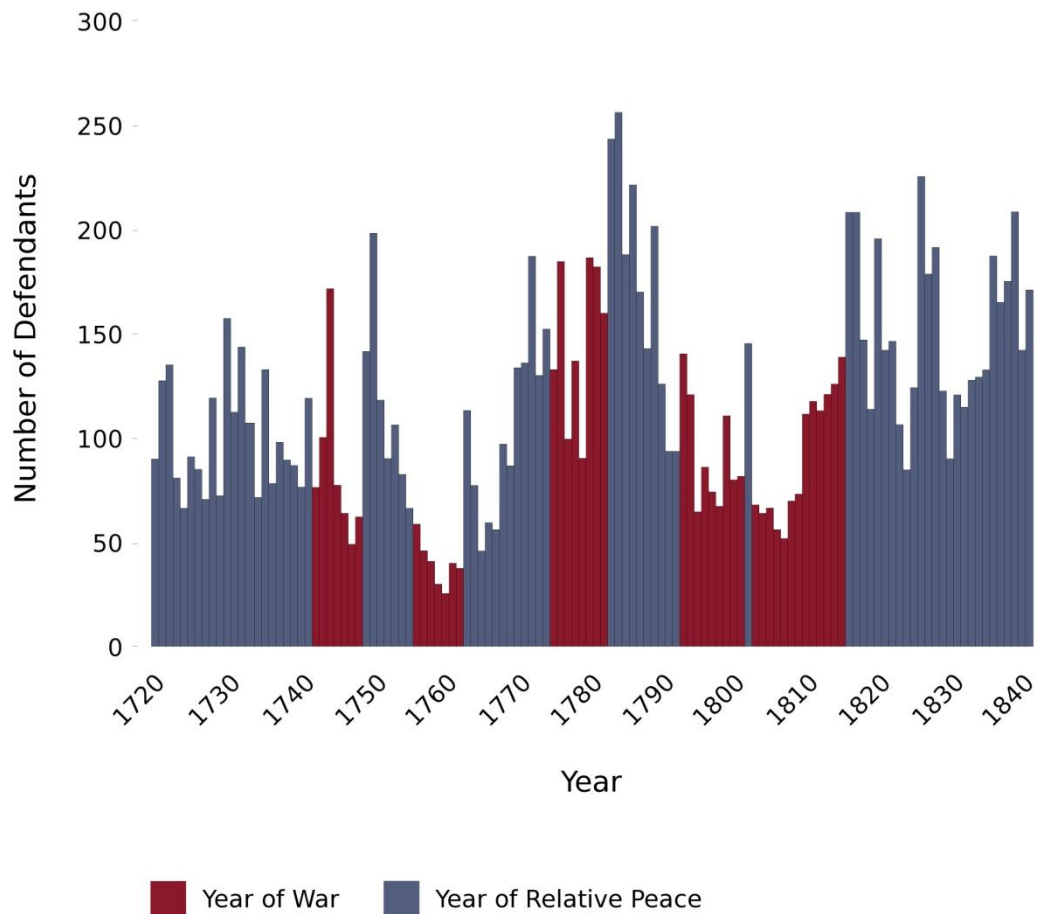
Defendants tried for theft-related offences per year at the Old Bailey, 1720-1841.

opportunism, but is also a reasonable indicator of poverty and subsistence crime. The majority of thefts likely went unnoticed, or at least unpunished by the justice system, and therefore left no written record. Serious violence on the other hand, and in particular homicide, would almost certainly have been taken before the courts if a defendant could be identified, and historians are therefore likely to have a record of the case.

The *Old Bailey Proceedings*, the record of felonious cases in London, do not directly show criminal activity or changes therein. Instead, they show the rate at which people turned to the criminal justice system to mediate serious disputes. As mentioned in the chapter *The Decision to Prosecute*, victims had a number of

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more on the XML schema and the crime type classifications used by the *OBPO*, see Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, 'Crime and Justice'.



**Figure 8.4: Violence-related offenders.**

Defendants tried for violence-related offences per year at the Old Bailey, 1720-1841.

options for dealing with crime that did not involve turning to the courts. Most crime likely went un-reported, so making claims about the rates of crime based on the rates of prosecution is a logical fallacy. A year that saw a rise in prosecutions could be evidence of increased tension in the community that year, but is not necessarily evidence that the number of crimes or conflicts was on the rise. Given the nature of the two categories of crime, we would expect a rise in violence-related cases to correspond to heightened community tension, whereas a rise in petty theft cases was more likely to be linked to poverty.

It was not only John Beattie who noted the challenges caused by demobilisation; contemporaries too were aware of its cruel impact. Writing in 1796, Westminster magistrate Patrick Colquhoun correctly anticipated a rise in crime at the end of the French wars. Colquhoun noted that to the large numbers of

thieves in London 'will be added numbers of the same class, who may be discharged from the Navy and Army' and that 'if some plan of employment is not speedily devised, to which all persons of this description may resort, who cannot otherwise subsist themselves in a honest way...no existing power will be able to keep them within bounds'.<sup>12</sup> A generation later in 1818, Arthur Young commented on the government's policy of dismissing so many soldiers and sailors at once, 'when it was perfectly well known that they could not find employment'. Young suggested instead that the process 'ought to have been done slowly and gradually, as the expense would have been an evil far less deplorable'.<sup>13</sup> Insights on this topic are not limited to the nineteenth century. In 1748 *The Gentleman's Magazine* published an essay in which the author commented on the fate of soon to be demobilised sailors and soldiers. He noted that 'as one half of these poor men will not be able to get employment, there is great, and just apprehension, that necessity will compel them to seize by violence, what they can see no method to attain by honest labour'. Mass demobilisation was also a uniquely British strategy. After the War of Austrian Succession, the French, as noted by the same *Gentleman's Magazine* article, only demobilised those soldiers who had a trade to which they could return.<sup>14</sup> Mass demobilisation is not therefore a foregone conclusion at this time for how to deal with soldiers during peacetime.

Douglas Hay's 1982 study on crime in Staffordshire built upon Beattie's earlier work and reinforced the link between peace and conflict, but also introduced the importance of prices and dearth in the equation.<sup>15</sup> As Hay noted, peace was not the only type of extraordinary event that had an impact on life in the metropolis. Acts of God wreaked havoc on the weather in the early decades of the nineteenth century, which in turn had dramatic effects on the harvest and subsequent cost of food. With so many people living at or near the breadline in London's overcrowded slums, a rise in the cost of living could be devastating.

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<sup>12</sup> Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*, 100.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Young, *Autobiography*, ed. M. Bethan Edwards (London, 1898), 470-1; J.G. Gazley, *The Life of Arthur Young, 1741-1820* (Philadelphia, 1973), 678, 687. Quoted in Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft', 138.

<sup>14</sup> 'Essay towards Establishing some Undertaking, for the Employment of the Soldiers and Seamen, who will be discharged on the approaching peace', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (July 1748), 293.

<sup>15</sup> Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft'.

The Irish in London were prone to both poverty and demobilisation. Demobilisation changed the dynamics of community relations and unexpectedly thrust new people together in a way that may have inevitably led to conflict. Economic hardship led to its own form of conflict. By the defeat of Napoleon, estimates of the poor Irish population in the city hovered around 14,000, of which roughly 6,900 were adults, and many of whom lived in abject poverty. In that same year, the Irish in St. Giles were the recipients of twenty thousand pounds worth of charity from the public, highlighting the particular susceptibility to economic distress of that Irish group.<sup>16</sup> The years 1801 to 1803 provide plenty of useful evidence for exploring how these factors affected the Irish in London in particular. The first three years of the new century correspond to three distinct periods in the criminal history of this very short period of time:

- 1) Dearth (January – August 1801)
- 2) Demobilisation (March 1802 – May 1803)
- 3) Remobilisation (June 1803 – December 1803)

Irish involvement in criminal proceedings during these three periods suggests that the Irish were relatively unaffected by the period of dearth in early 1801, but were proportionately affected by demobilisation. By comparison, English defendants were affected significantly by both dearth and demobilisation, implying that the two groups had a different relationship to London at this time.

### ***Dearth and the Irish (1801)***

The second consecutive crop failure in 1801 had an immediate impact on life for the poor. The workhouses groaned under the increased pressure as those locals who were most vulnerable turned to the parish for relief. Jeremy Boulton and Leonard Schwartz's data on pauper admittances at the St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse show that intake during the price crisis of 1801 was far higher than in a normal year. On average, seventy-three paupers per month entered the workhouse during the crisis; those numbers dropped to only sixty-seven per

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<sup>16</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis, ordered by the House of Commons* (London, 1816), 7.

month during the demobilisation of the following year, and fell again to fifty-six once the war resumed in 1803.<sup>17</sup> According to these records, a higher proportion of those entering the workhouse during the price crisis were doing so for the first time, suggesting that it had become a refuge for people unaccustomed to such need. They included twenty-seven year old Irish-named Catherine Coyle, a woman married 'in the Roman Faith', who entered the workhouse only once in March 1801, leaving just over a month later and disappearing from the record.<sup>18</sup>

Entrances were at their highest in July of 1801, with ninety-four paupers taken in. This summer anomaly caused by a one-month jump in the price of wheat overrode even the powerful seasonal trend of need that typically regulated workhouse admittances, which was generally highest during the colder months. For many who lived so close to the breadline, a single bad month was more than they could withstand. A disproportionate number of those entering the workhouse during the price crisis of early 1801 were women and children, implying that the struggles relating to high prices did not just affect those without roots in the area, but also affected locals who had legal settlement and were thus eligible for indoor poor relief.<sup>19</sup> This access to relief may have kept some locals away from subsistence crime.

The crimes prosecuted during the period of high prices had many characteristics in common with the demobilisation and remobilisation that followed. The conviction rate in theft cases (the bulk of reported crime) remained stable throughout, at about 64 per cent. This suggests that on average, once a case was at trial, the factors leading to the arrest had no impact on the outcome. Irish defendants followed a similar pattern in each of the three periods (62, 60, and 58 per cent respectively).<sup>20</sup> In addition to conviction rates, there is continuity in the number of female prosecutions, which changed very little across the three

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<sup>17</sup> In total, 585 paupers were admitted to the workhouse in St. Martin-in-the-Fields during the high price crisis (73 per month on average). By comparison, 934 were admitted to the same workhouse during demobilisation (67 per month) and 394 in the months following remobilisation (56 per month). Boulton and Schwarz, 'St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse data', *Pauper Lives Project* (2013).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, reference number: F4022, UID: 87380.

<sup>19</sup> See James Stephen Taylor, 'The Impact of Pauper Settlement 1691-1834', *Past & Present*, 73 (1976), 42–74. and Snell, 'Pauper Settlement', 382 for a fuller discussion on settlement.

<sup>20</sup> n = 53, 158 and 62.

periods, rising only marginally when war resumed.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the number of defendants per trial remained fairly stable across all groups – and in fact across all years of the early nineteenth century, with four out of five trials involving a single accused, varying slightly depending on the type of crime.<sup>22</sup>

The months of dearth also shared many characteristics with demobilisation, that were not seen in the period after the war had resumed. The most obvious way in which this manifests itself is through an increase in male defendants. The number of cases involving male defendants during periods of high community pressure (dearth and demobilisation) was significantly higher than when the country was at war and prices were more reasonable. Men were accused of committing an average of sixty-three theft-related felonious crimes per month during both of those high-pressure interludes. By comparison, only thirty-eight did so when prices were low and the war was waging – nearly half the previous level.<sup>23</sup> All signs suggest that the Irish men were a proportionate part of that rise and fall, rather than distinct from the English. Forty out of fifty-three Irish defendants during the period of dearth were male (75 per cent). One hundred eighteen of one hundred fifty-eight during demobilisation were male (75 per cent). Only thirty-seven out of sixty-two (60 per cent) were Irish in the six months after remobilization.

Certain types of theft seem to have been more affected by added strain than others. Burglary, shoplifting, pocket picking, and grand larceny all increased when times were tough. Those classes of crime typically involved victims who were longstanding members of the community. This was particularly true for burglary and shoplifting, as the victim needed a home or a shop to be victimised – neither of which many wanderers likely possessed. Locals who initiated these prosecutions were defending their turf. The bulk of the increase in these

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<sup>21</sup> The number of female defendants rises from an average of 15 per month to 17 per month once the troops are remobilised in June of 1803. This rise is not considered statistically significant based on an unpaired t-test ( $p = 0.1971$ ) – keeping in mind that failing to pass a t-test does not mean something is insignificant.

<sup>22</sup> Approximately 65 per cent of violence cases involved a single defendant. For theft cases, the number was closer to 85 per cent. These rough figures held true across all categories and years under review.

<sup>23</sup> Unpaired t-test ( $p = 0.0001$ ) suggests a very statistically significant difference.



particular categories of crime was not therefore due to conflicts between pairs of newcomers.

Some of these increases directly contradict Hay's findings in his work on Staffordshire. In particular, he noted that rises in burglary cases during times of dearth were evidence of families hastily looking for food in someone else's house, without much fore-planning. He also believed that pocket picking and shoplifting were unaffected by economic hardship because they were the business of organised gangs rather than struggling families.<sup>24</sup> Based on the evidence for 1801-1803, it would seem that neither of these observations applied as a general rule in London in times of adversity.

Burglary cases appearing in the Old Bailey in early 1801 tended to be fairly organised for-profit endeavours rather than the hasty activities of the desperate. Richard Wright, John Smith, and Thomas Johnstone were convicted of stealing a hundred pounds weight of tea, sixty pounds of sugar, two pounds of nutmeg, four pounds of chocolate, and three pounds of cocoa from the home of Richard Harvey.<sup>25</sup> Although all of this material was edible, this is hardly a paltry yield taken to sustain a hungry family. Instead, these three unrelated associates must have had a plan for turning the stolen goods into cash, but were caught before they were able to enact it. The lone Irish man to face a charge for burglary in early 1801 was John Nowland, a Dubliner by birth who broke into the house of James Bateson in St. Giles, taking jewelry, various ornamental objects made from silver and gold, and an assortment of bank notes.<sup>26</sup> Nowland and his London-born accomplices had clearly targeted Bateson, and made away with a valuable haul. Despite Hay's findings, cases of desperate and opportunistic burglars such as Sarah Gordon, who stole only a pair of children's shoes during her brief intrusion into Leonard Tweed's home, are comparatively rare.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft', 134.

<sup>25</sup> 'May 1801, trial of Richard Wright, John Smith, Thomas Johnstone (t18010520-52)', *OBPO*.

<sup>26</sup> 'September 1801, trial of John Nowland, Richard Freake, and William Whitfield (t18010916-50)', *OBPO*; HO 26, Middlesex (1801), Page 61.

<sup>27</sup> 'May 1801, trial of Sarah Gordon (t18010520-18)', *OBPO*.

As for shoplifting and pocket picking, gangs did operate in the capital, but contrary to Hay's conclusions, prosecutions in the metropolis were also positively correlated to increasing community pressure. Organised gangs certainly took advantage of increasing desperation to recruit more members; however, pressures in times of want also pushed inexperienced shoplifters and pickpockets out onto the streets, where they made easy targets for the watchful eyes of the thief-taker eager to claim a reward.<sup>28</sup> Those rewards may partly explain the rise in prosecutions during hard times, as some saw an opportunity for getting themselves through the economic troubles by turning in suspected thieves. Statutory rewards for convicting burglars, highway robbers, and coiners, for example, were lucrative at £40 per defendant, on top of any private bounties offered.<sup>29</sup> This meant that accusers such as John Fletcher, who put four defendants on the stand in 1801, stood to earn as much as £160 for his efforts – far more than the value of the goods stolen by the accused, and a good payday for anyone.<sup>30</sup> Contemporary defense counsels were certainly aware that prosecution patterns may have been linked to the vested interest that members of the community had in accusing and convicting someone of a crime, and they wanted juries to know the same.<sup>31</sup> Of the forty-nine cases between 1801 and 1803 in which the witness was asked by the defense if they had acted to get a monetary reward, only two of them occurred after war restarted.

During the period of 1801 to 1803, Irish defendants appear in their lowest numbers during the price crisis of 1801, accused of an average of 6.2 crimes per month (compared to 11.3 and 9.7 per month in the later two periods). That is not to suggest the Irish were unaffected by the rise in prices. Undoubtedly for many it had a profound effect on their lives, and the Irish suffered terribly alongside

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<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Wild, the most famous thief taker, it emerged in 1725, had been the ringleader of the gang behind many of the crimes he then 'solved' in order to generate business for himself. For more on thief taking and early policing in London, see Clive Emsley, 'Detection and Prevention: The Old English Police and the New, 1750-1900', *Historical Social Research*, 37 (1986), 69–88; John Beattie, 'Early Detection: The Bow Street Runners in Late Eighteenth-Century London', in Clive Emsley and Haia Shpayer-Makov (eds.), *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950* (Aldershot, UK, 2006), 15–32.

<sup>29</sup> Beattie, 'Early Detection', 16.

<sup>30</sup> 'April 1801, trial of William Croson, William Widdison, Samuel Croson, John Croson (t18010415-62)', *OBPO*.

<sup>31</sup> Beattie, 'Early Detection', 30.

their English counterparts. There certainly is evidence of Irish defendants involved in conflicts that fit the model of subsistence crime and dearth. For example, the trial of Dennis Kennedy, William McCormack, and Thomas Jones, who were convicted of stealing and butchering four sheep – ‘being hungry’ – in May of 1801.<sup>32</sup> Kennedy was born in Ireland (though we know not where), and McCormack likely so; without further evidence to the contrary, it would be difficult to suggest this crime was not linked to the lingering effects of the economic crisis.<sup>33</sup> Others too demonstrate characteristics of poverty crime. John Sullivan, who was looking for a job, was convicted of trying to steal tools from a carpenter in May 1801, claiming ‘it was the first time he had ever been guilty of anything, and begged for mercy’.<sup>34</sup> Two months later, the opportunistic John Connor was convicted of stealing clothing drying on a hedge, as he passed by on the road. Rather than offer a defense, a dejected Connor said only that he would ‘leave it to your Lordship [the magistrate] and the Jury’.<sup>35</sup> Yet, despite this handful of poverty-related examples, it would seem that the price crisis of 1801 affected the Irish very little – at least in terms of how it manifested itself through prosecutions for felonious crime.

Many of the other crimes involving Irish defendants show scant evidence that the added pressures of the price crisis can be blamed for their actions. Irish-born Michael Cassidy, a footman, was accused of stealing articles of clothing from his master. In his defense, Cassidy blamed someone else of planting the clothes in his great-coat, which he claimed he did not discover for several days. The jury rejected Cassidy’s story, but if it was true he may simply have been the victim of a disgruntled coworker.<sup>36</sup> Munster-born William Roach, who stole an iron bar from his employer of three years, seemed merely to be drunk and insisted that he found the item in the street.<sup>37</sup> There are no signs he was desperate, or even that his continued employment was in jeopardy at the time of the theft. Michael

<sup>32</sup> ‘May 1801, trial of Dennis Kennedy, William McCormack, Thomas Jones (t18010520-3), *OBPO*.

<sup>33</sup> Birthplace of two of the defendants was listed in the *Middlesex Criminal Registers*, the National Archives (HO 26). Kennedy was born in Ireland. Jones was born in the north of England. McCormack’s birthplace is unknown.

<sup>34</sup> ‘May 1801, trial of John Sullivan (t18010520-42)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>35</sup> ‘July 1801, trial of John Connor (t18010701-25)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>36</sup> ‘February 1801, trial of Michael Cassidy (t18010218-2)’, *OBPO*; HO 26, Middlesex (1801), Page 13.

<sup>37</sup> ‘April 1801, trial of William Roach (t18010414-114)’, *OBPO*; HO 26, Middlesex (1801), Page 72.

O'Neal, also born in Ireland, who was accused of stealing a coat from William Edley, may well have been duped into buying stolen property if his testimony is to be believed.<sup>38</sup> From the surviving evidence, none of these men were outwardly struggling in a way that we could tie directly to the effects of rising prices.

It is difficult to tell why the Irish were seemingly so unaffected by this period of dearth. Part of the explanation may be that many of the months in question fell in the winter; in the previous chapter I argued that Irish seasonal migration meant the Irish population in London tended to be at its lowest at that time.<sup>39</sup> But there is also some evidence that the Irish population in London may have been in slight decline at the turn of the century. London did have a long-term Irish population, including men such as Irish-born Maurice Doyle, who had been steadily employed as a labourer in the capital for the previous seventeen years.<sup>40</sup> Many of these permanent residents likely had little if any useful knowledge of life in Ireland, and many lived very close to the breadline. It is possible that with so many Irish in London already struggling to get by, an increase in the intensity of the struggle resulted in relatively fewer extra people who had to turn to crime to survive. However, this permanent Irish population in the metropolis was also more likely than the itinerants to qualify for indoor relief under the poor laws – particularly if they had been able to sustain work for one year at some point during their stay in London, or in the case of women, if they had managed to marry a local. London-born offspring of Irish immigrants similarly would have qualified for support from the parish of their birth. The records for the St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse show a sustained decline in annual admittances of paupers with Irish names between 1785 and 1808, dropping from seventy-two down to only thirty, most of whom were women and children.<sup>41</sup> We can see further evidence of this exodus in the permanent Irish population through data on Irish merchants. The number of merchants in London with Irish names was miniscule throughout the early nineteenth century; however, the first few years after the Union of Parliaments represents the only time we see a year-upon-year

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<sup>38</sup> 'July 1801, trial of Michael O'Neal (t18010701-10)', *OBPO*; HO 26, Middlesex (1801), Page 63.

<sup>39</sup> See chapter seven in this thesis: 'Cycles of Conflict'.

<sup>40</sup> 'December 1802, trial of Maurice Doyle and John Halesworth (t18021201-18)', *OBPO*.

<sup>41</sup> Boulton and Schwarz, 'St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse data'.

decline in their numbers. Merchants with obviously Irish names fell from twenty-three in 1801 to only fifteen in 1805.<sup>42</sup>

Why, and to what extent the Irish were leaving is a question for another study. As a group they may have been unaware of the trend. It was perhaps linked to the disaffection of some people with the Union of Parliaments or a desire to be a part of the United Irish movement and growing Irish nationalism in the late 1790s.<sup>43</sup> Many people expected an economic boom in Ireland as a result of the union with Britain; unfortunately, as Paul Bew notes, the boom never arrived.<sup>44</sup> This does not mean, however, that Irish emigrants did not return home from London seeking economic growth. For others the opposite may be true, and the return to peace in Ireland after the end of military rule following the rebellion may have convinced some Irish in London that a further rebellion was unlikely, so they could safely return home. Thousands fled Ireland before the rebellion, many of whom temporarily ended up in Wales; others presumably made their way to London and may have had every intention of going back.<sup>45</sup> As Donald MacRaild argued, a move from Ireland to Britain was less psychologically permanent than was a move across the Atlantic, and minor life events could lead people to move back across the Irish Sea.<sup>46</sup> The option of the military itself likely also contributed to the Irish exodus. Arthur Gilbert highlighted the extremely high rates of Irish men amongst Middlesex recruits, which will be discussed further below, and which may have acted as a temporary means of clearing the city of Irish young men.<sup>47</sup> Bartlett's work certainly supports that conclusion, as does Spiers', both of whom noted the speed with which Irish men enlisted when given

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<sup>42</sup> Calculated using the fifty most common Irish surnames as defined in the chapter in this thesis: 'Finding the Irish'. Merchants counted in the annual editions of *The Post Office London Directory*, 41 volumes (London, 1800-1841), and *Kent's Directory*, 3 volumes. (London, 1802-1804).

<sup>43</sup> The Union of Parliaments was certainly not without its detractors and controversies. For more, see: S.J. Connolly, 'Aftermath and Adjustment', in *A New History of Ireland*, volume 5 (Oxford, 1989); Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*; Jim Smyth, 'The Act of Union and "Public Opinion"', in Jim Smith (ed.), *Revolution, Counter-Revolution, and Union: Ireland in the 1790s* (Cambridge, 2000), 146-160; Paul Bew, *Ireland the Politics of Enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007).

<sup>44</sup> Bew, *Ireland the Politics of Enmity*, 564.

<sup>45</sup> Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: The Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2000), 15-16.

<sup>46</sup> Donald M. MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (London, 1999), 4-5.

<sup>47</sup> Terence Denman, '"Hibernia officina militum": Irish recruitment to the British regular army, 1660-1815', *Irish Sword*, 20 (1996), 163.

the chance.<sup>48</sup> The draw of America might also hold part of the answer. Kevin Kenny noted that even during the two decades of war with France, more than 100,000 Irish individuals crossed the Atlantic to North America.<sup>49</sup> Whatever the reasons, it seems that the Irish appeared comparatively unaffected by the dearth of 1801 because the Irish population in the city was comparatively low. However, with the coming of demobilisation, that changed dramatically.

### ***Demobilisation and the Irish (1802-1803)***

The price crisis subsided by August 1801 and wheat prices would remain low until 1805. That autumn was largely uneventful as it relates to prices and demobilisation. But early in 1802 that changed with the signing of the *Treaty of Amiens*, bringing to an end the French Revolutionary War that had been waging for the past decade. The uneasy peace would survive for just over a year. We often think of peace in unreservedly positive terms. The horrors of war cannot be over-emphasised, neither for those sent to the battlefields, nor those left at home with their lives and families ripped apart. Nevertheless, the return to peace does not bring with it an end to suffering, nor does it restore happiness for everyone involved. The Duke of Wellington's letter signalled not only a turning point in the war, but also a turning point in the economy. This turning point would dearly cost the labouring classes, the very men who had served in the army and navy. With the end of conflict, the government no longer needed a colossal standing force. In fact, it was desperate to shed both soldiers and sailors from the national budget. By the end of the war, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's balance books had plunged deeper into the red than ever before, and rumblings in parliament made it clear that continued spending must end. While it lasted, the military was quick to respond by discharging servicemen. Within a month of the ink drying on the treaty, the British navy had slashed sixty thousand men from its service.

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<sup>48</sup> Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion', 249; Spiers, 'Army organization and society', 335.

<sup>49</sup> Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish* (London, 2000), 45.

A further twenty thousand were released by the following February, leaving the navy at less than half the strength it had boasted only a year earlier.<sup>50</sup> Seventy thousand soldiers also found themselves superfluous after the treaty.<sup>51</sup> In a matter of months, the nation's biggest employers had shed 150,000 posts. According to the census, this was equivalent to the entire population of the county of Sussex – including women and children.<sup>52</sup> The human impact of that cut in public spending would echo throughout society, and would manifest itself through increased conflict in places like London.

The sheer size of the British military during the war made it a major employer, particularly of young men who would otherwise occupy wage-earning positions at home.<sup>53</sup> During periods of peace, the government's demobilisation strategies were striking for the swiftness with which redundancies were made. These redundancies can be observed in Figures 8.5 and 8.6, which show the changing size of the navy and army over time. Consistent comparable records for the navy are readily available thanks to William James, who compiled the figures in the 1830s, and are an excellent indicator of trends in naval employment. Army records are a bit more difficult to pull together, and must be collated from more than a dozen reports laid before parliament, some of which seem slightly contradictory. These parliamentary reports were not intended to be used in conjunction with one another, and at times consider different types of soldiers part of the army. For example, one report may include German troops under the

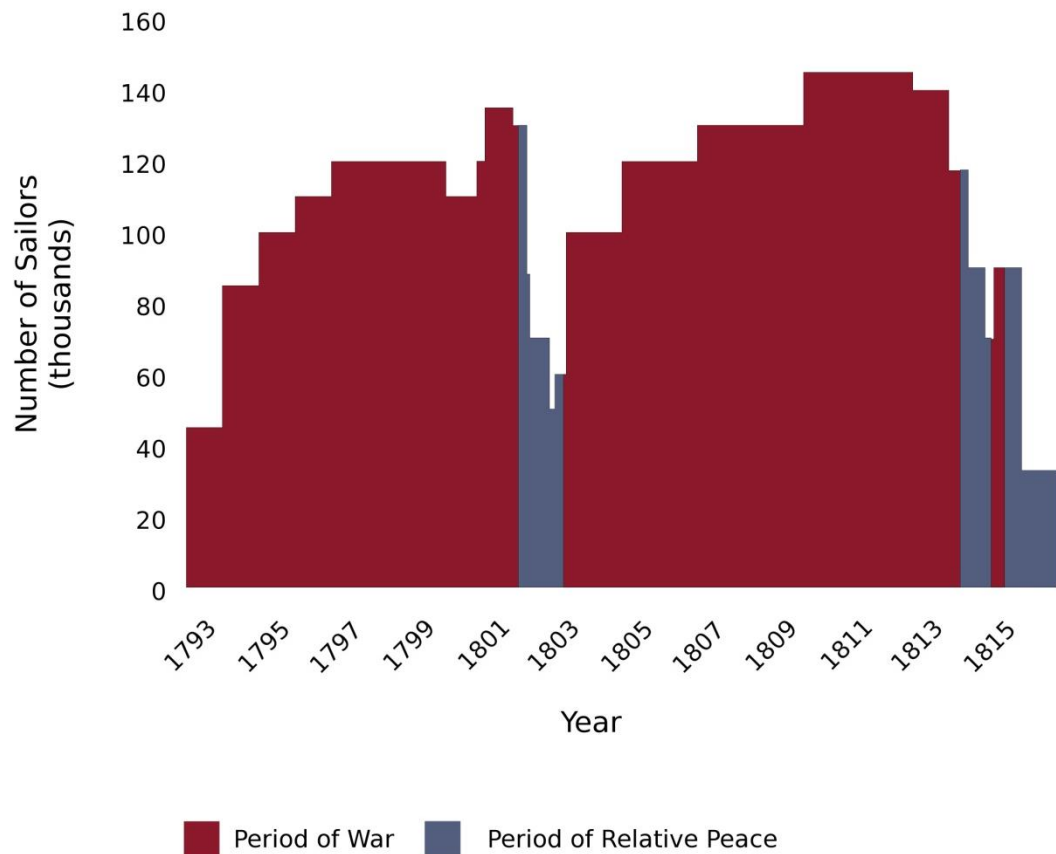
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<sup>50</sup> William James, *The Naval History of Great Britain from the Declaration of War by France in 1793 to the Accession of George IV*. 5 Volumes (London, 1837), 357–359.

<sup>51</sup> In January of 1802 the regular army stood at 169,000 men. By January of 1803 it had fallen to 103,000. For more, see: 'Return of the effective strength of His Majesty's land forces, on the 1<sup>st</sup> January and on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, in the years 1801, 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, & 1807, and on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1808', *HCP*, VII, 316, 267.

<sup>52</sup> 'Abstract of the answers and returns made pursuant to an Act, passed in the Forty-first Year of His Majesty King George III. Intituled, An Act for taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and the Increase or Diminution thereof' (21 December 1801), 366. Retrieved via *histpop: Online Historical Population Reports, 2004-2007* (accessed 25 November 2013).

<sup>53</sup> J.H. Clapham argued that the British military in particular was heavily peopled by the labouring classes who would seek employment after the war, whereas the Germany military was primarily made up of farmers who had land in need of tilling. J.H. Clapham, 'The Economic Condition of Europe after the Napoleonic War', *The Scientific Monthly*, 11 (1920), 320–325.



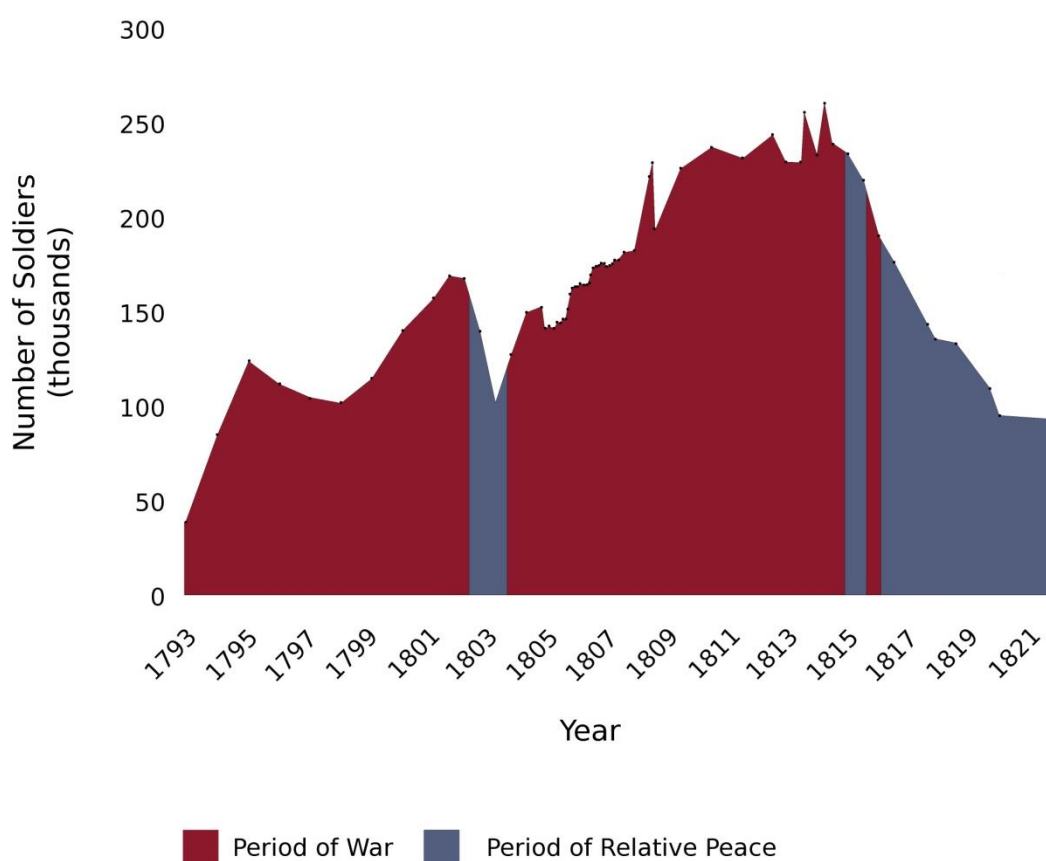
**Figure 8.5: British naval strength.**

Number of seamen and marines in the British navy by lunar month, 1793-1816.<sup>54</sup>

control of a British general, whereas another may not. Despite the limitations of the sources, the trends in army employment can be seen across these records, even if they are not as clear as for the navy. The graphs have been colour-coded to show months of war and months of peace. However, even without the colour-coding, peacetime is fairly obvious, marked by a sharp drop in military strength, followed by a sharp increase when war again resumed. Though the graphs are illustrative of the rise and fall of military employment, it is easy to fail to appreciate the human-impact of what these graphs depict.

<sup>54</sup> Figures aggregated from James, 'The Naval History of Great Britain', see appendices of each volume.





**Figure 8.6: British army strength.**

Number of rank and file soldiers in the British army by calendar month, 1793-1821.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Figures aggregated from parliamentary reports: 'Return of the number of effective men in the British army, from the 1st January 1775 to the 1st January 1783', *House of Commons Papers; Accounts and Papers* [hereafter *HCP*], X, 172 (1806), 393; 'Return of the number of effective men in the British army, from the 1st January 1793 to the 1st January 1801', *HCP*, X, 173 (1806), 397; 'Return of the effective strength of the regular and militia forces, at the several periods within mentioned', *HCP*, IV, 18 (1806-07), 159; 'Return of the effective strength of His Majesty's regular and militia forces, on the 1st of each month; from the 1st July 1804, to the 1st March 1806', *HCP*, IV, 120 (1806-07), 339; 'Return of the effective strength and establishment of the regular and militia forces, on the 1st March 1805, 1806, & 1807', *HCP*, IV, 110 (1807), p. 309; 'Return of the effective strength of His Majesty's land forces, on the 1st January and on the 1st July, in the years 1801, 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806 & 1707, and on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1808', *HCP*, VII, 316 (1808), 4; 'Return of the effective strength of the regular and militia forces, on the 1st July 1807, and on the 1st February 1808', *HCP*, VII, 55 (1808), 145; 'State of the British army, distinguishing the number of men and boys who are engaged for limited service only, from those who are engaged for service for life', *HCP*, VII, 91 (1808), 185; 'Return of the regular army, (exclusive of artillery) on the 1st July 1807, and the 1st February 1808', *HCP*, VII, 56 (1808), 147; 'Return of the effective strength of the regular and militia forces, on the 25th June, and 25th December, 1812', *HCP*, XIII, 34 (1812-13), 1; 'Return of the effective strength of the British army, in rank and file, in each year from the year 1804 to the year 1813, inclusive', *HCP*, XI, 16 (1813-14), 269; 'Return of the effective strength of the regular and militia forces, on the 25th June, and 25th December, 1813', *HCP*, XI, 117 (1813-14), 283; 'Return of the effective strength, in rank and file, of the regular and militia forces, on the 25th June and 25th December 1814', *HCP*, IX, 7 (1814-15), 321; 'Return of the effective strength of the British Army, on the 25th June and 25th December 1815, serving at home and abroad', *HCP*, XII, 100 (1816), 421; 'Return of the effective strength of officers,

As a result of demobilisation, many of the Duke of Wellington's men who had survived the campaign found themselves readjusting to civilian life on very short notice. For thousands, this life change occurred on a dock in Portsmouth or London, or elsewhere in Britain, where both soldiers and sailors were released to go on their way.<sup>56</sup> In John Smith's case, he was 'paid off' at Chatham in Kent, and took a coach to Gravesend at the mouth of the Thames where he caught a boat into London.<sup>57</sup> Smith was on his way to Deptford in Kent, but for him that involved a journey via the capital. Little regard was given to ensuring these men could make it back home – wherever that was. Most likely did so on foot or by a range of modes of transportation, as had John Smith. Perhaps their only consolation was exemption from the 1744 vagrancy act, meaning they were permitted to beg their way home, if they should so desire.<sup>58</sup>

More formal assistance was reserved for the aged or wounded soldiers and sailors, who, if they were lucky, might be able to secure a place to retire at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, or the Royal Hospital at Greenwich. Officers might find themselves on half-pay, a unique social safety net for the privileged few. Able men from the rank and file were eligible only for a 1 shilling per day pension, to prevent them from having to beg.<sup>59</sup> Other than that, these men were left to their own devices; and there were hundreds of thousands of them.

It did not take long for these men to begin appearing on London's streets. The 'Examinations of Invalid Soldiers', produced by the Chelsea Hospital, note the outcome of interviews each soldier underwent before receiving his pension from the hospital.<sup>60</sup> On the third and fourth of May 1802, just thirty-nine days after the peace had been signed, approximately 575 soldiers presented themselves for

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non-commissioned officers, and privates, in the army, on the 1st January 1817', *HCP*, XIII, 169 (1817), 189.

<sup>56</sup> Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft', 140.

<sup>57</sup> 'February 1803, trial of William Climer (t18030216-61)', *OBPO*.

<sup>58</sup> Hitchcock, 'Begging on the Streets', 495.

<sup>59</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (London: 2013), 192.

<sup>60</sup> Caroline Louise Nielsen, 'Disability, Fraud, and Medical Experience at the Royal Hospital of Chelsea in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (eds.), *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815* (Liverpool: 2014), 183-201.

out-pensions at Chelsea Hospital, compared to 88 in the whole of the previous May. The number was so high that the hospital had to take the unprecedented step of splitting up the admissions over two days. The hospital broke from its usual pattern of monthly interviews, and the frequency of interview days increased dramatically, as did the sizes of the cohorts looking for relief. The spike that began with demobilisation was dramatic, and remained high (three times higher than normal) until the following June, when the troops were again removed.<sup>61</sup>

Thirty-nine days is a good measure of how long demobilisation took to affect London, because all soldiers who wanted to claim a pension had to present themselves in person for inspection at the Chelsea Hospital in Westminster.<sup>62</sup> The third of May also marks the moment when prosecutions for theft-related offenses begin to rise from their annual low the month before. Theft prosecutions rise fairly steadily until a peak towards the end of the year (Figure 8.7). Soldiers in London who had no history in the area were able to access some fleeting relief via their Chelsea (or Admiralty) pension, but the social safety net of indoor relief was reserved for the locals. According to Green, London and the West Midlands suffered disproportionately under a greater burden of paupers seeking relief during periods of demobilisation.<sup>63</sup>

Despite earlier restrictions on Irish Catholic participation in the military, the Irish were an important part of the British military by the nineteenth century and would have been involved in this demobilisation. In seventeenth-century Ireland, only born-Protestants were eligible for military service; to police this restriction, authorities required a letter from a bishop or minister to certify a man's eligibility.<sup>64</sup> Limitations remained in place throughout most of the eighteenth century; however, a number of historians have shown that these restrictions were ineffective. According to Terence Denman, an intense need for troops during the eighteenth century led to a relaxing of the restrictions, at least

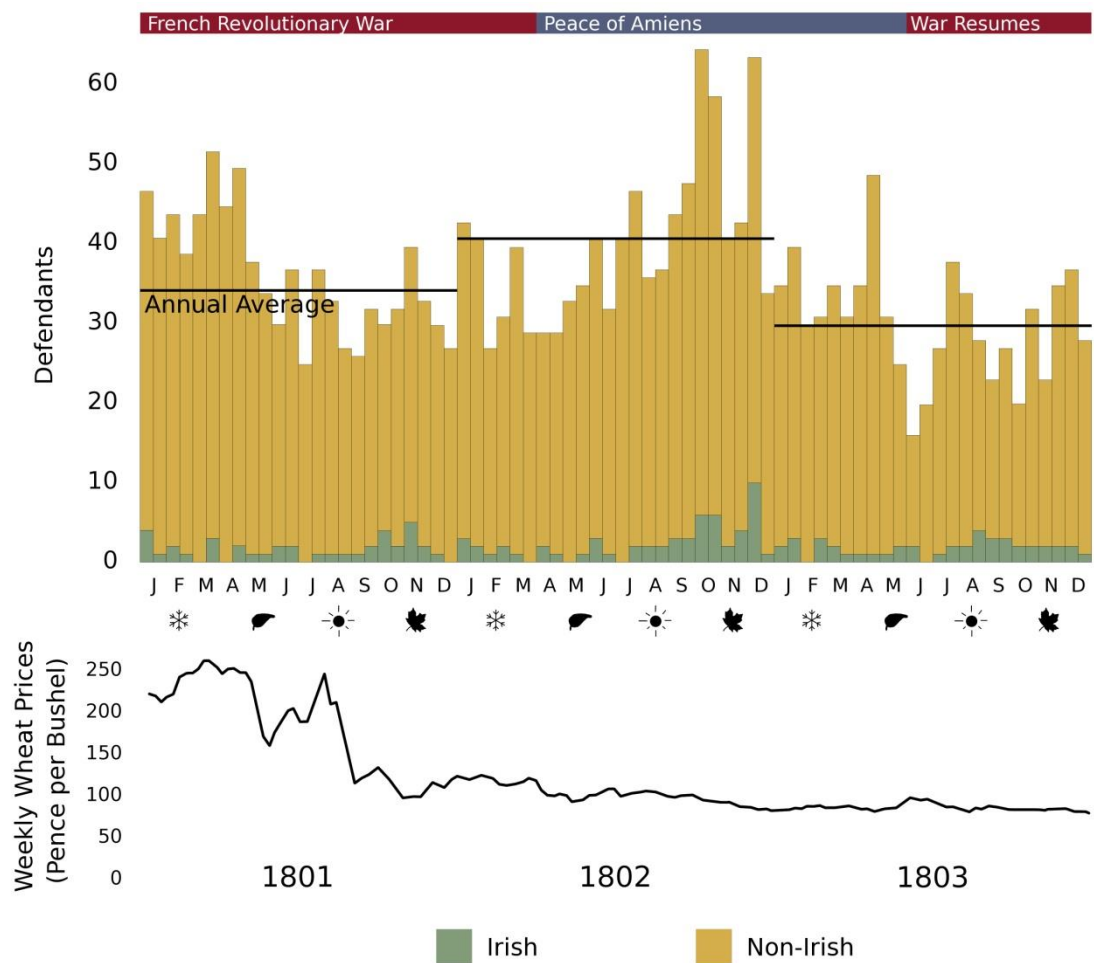
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<sup>61</sup> WO 116/11.

<sup>62</sup> Nielsen, 'Disability, Fraud, and Medical Experience', 194-5.

<sup>63</sup> Green, *Pauper Capital*, 30.

<sup>64</sup> Denman, 'Hibernia officina militum', 148-151.



**Figure 8.7: Theft-related prosecution rates and wheat prices 1801-1803**

All 2,572 Irish and non-Irish defendants tried for theft at the Old Bailey by date of crime, as well as the weekly price of wheat in pence per imperial bushel.

in practice. During the 1750s George II actively looked to Ireland for recruits for his regiments heading to Canada, which were said to be comprised of ‘convicts and Irish papists’. During the American war in the 1770s the need for soldiers again outstripped supply, and according to Sergeant Lamb of the 9<sup>th</sup> Foot, the ‘rule against the enlistment of Papists had recently been waived’.<sup>65</sup> Even before the law banning Catholics from service was repealed in 1793, many Irish Catholics found employment in the ranks of the privately run East India Company, in which Arthur Gilbert estimates half of the recruits from the 1770s

<sup>65</sup> Denman, ‘Hibernia officina militum’, 156, 160.

were of Irish extraction.<sup>66</sup> Others still found work as mercenaries in European armies.<sup>67</sup>

This long history of Irish Catholics in the British military intensified in the 1790s. The Catholic Relief Act of 1793 put an end to the legal restrictions on Irish Catholics in the rank and file.<sup>68</sup> While certainly a welcome gesture for Catholics, the reasons behind the change had everything to do with the impending war with France and the subsequent need to raise troops. The change had an almost immediate effect on Irish participation in war. Thomas Bartlett calculated the armed forces of the crown of Ireland at 116,584 on the first day of 1800. Bartlett suggests one in five Irish men saw service during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.<sup>69</sup> Peter Karsten estimates the number of 'green redcoats' at 159,000 between 1793 and 1815. Compared to the military's peak strength of 370,000 regulars in September of 1813, the Irish numbers were formidable.<sup>70</sup> The records of the Chelsea Hospital confirm high levels of Irish participation in the war, which may have been as high as one third of soldiers.<sup>71</sup> The Irish are very well represented amongst these more than sixty thousand entries. On 17 June 1802, of the approximately 300 men who presented themselves to the Chelsea Hospital to have their wounds and disabilities assessed, 104 were Irish-born.<sup>72</sup> According to Karsten, certain British regiments at this time were almost entirely Irish Catholic.<sup>73</sup> Irish interest in the military was uniquely high, perhaps driven by a need to make a living. Arthur Gilbert calculated that Irish Catholics in

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<sup>66</sup> Arthur N. Gilbert, 'Recruitment and Reform in the East India Company Army, 1760-1800', *Journal of British Studies*, 15 (1975), 100.

<sup>67</sup> Peter Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?', *Journal of Social History*, 1 (1983), 32.

<sup>68</sup> 'The Catholic Relief Act, 1793', in Edmund Curtis and R.B. McDowell (eds.), *Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922* (London, 1943), 198-202.

<sup>69</sup> Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion', 247-249.

<sup>70</sup> Note that the value of 159,000 represents the number of recruits over time, and should not be misconstrued to suggest the Irish represented forty per cent of the military. 'Return of the effective strength of the British army, in rank and file, in each year from the year 1804 to the year 1813, inclusive', *HCP*, XI 269 (16), 1813-1814; James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, see appendices of each volume for tallies.

<sup>71</sup> Nielsen, 'Disability, Fraud, and Medical Experience', 183-201.

<sup>72</sup> 'Royal Hospital, Chelsea: Disability and Royal Artillery Out-Pensions, Admission Books', 1802-1807, WO 116/12, The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>73</sup> Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army', 56.

some Middlesex parishes comprised eighty per cent of all recruits in 1796-97.<sup>74</sup> E.M. Spiers reinforced this claim, noting the British regulars recruited 3,000 to 4,000 Irish men each year in the early nineteenth century – representing one third of all recruits.<sup>75</sup> The Irish also managed to infiltrate positions of authority: Anthony Gary Brown identified 650 Irish (by birth or marriage) officers in the Royal Navy between 1793 and 1815.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, life was difficult for Irish soldiers and their families. Irish politician, Sir John Newport took up the cause on behalf of Irish soldiers, noting in parliament that ‘there was hardly ever any considerable embarkation of troops from Portsmouth or Plymouth, that from 800 to 1,000 soldiers’ wives were not turned loose to beg their way as well as they could to their own country’, arguing that the guinea and a half each woman was given was scarcely enough to get her to Cork or Waterford, where she was left destitute. Newport also argued against the logic of a policy that dissuaded Irish militia members from joining the regular army by halting the militia allowance (2s. per week) given to their wives if the husband signed up as a regular recruit. The policy, he believed, was the ‘principal objection which now stands in the way of their volunteering’.<sup>77</sup> Yet despite these challenges, Irish troops were a mainstay in the British army and navy during the French Wars. With so many Irish men involved in the military, and so many more Irish individuals living close to or below the breadline in London, a major disruption to the status quo would certainly be felt by the Irish in particular.

That disruption would come abruptly in 1802 with the coming of peace, when those soldiers were released back into civilian life *en masse* through large-scale demobilisation. During the interlude of peace, the *OBPO* XML tags identified only twelve men with ties to the army or navy who were accused of committing the

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<sup>74</sup> Denman, ‘Hibernia officina militum’, 163.

<sup>75</sup> E.M. Spiers, ‘Army Organisation and Society in the Nineteenth Century’ in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), 335.

<sup>76</sup> Anthony Gary Brown, ‘The Irish Sea-Officers of the Royal Navy, 1793-1815’, *Irish Sword*, 21 (1999), 393-429.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Irish Militia Enlisting Bill’, *House of Commons Debates*, 4, c.c.181-2 (2 April 1805).

felonies under discussion in this chapter.<sup>78</sup> The XML occupation tags are not comprehensive, and some entries were understandably missed by the taggers who presumably classified this information manually. The men identified ranged from Captain's steward John Stevens, blamed with the disappearance of a tea caddy from his ship, to seamen William Jones and John Smith, charged with taking the personal effects of Thomas Worsdeal, a steward of the first regiment of foot guards.<sup>79</sup> In both of these instances we are reading about military-on-military crime, rather than attacks on the locals.

It was not always the soldiers and sailors causing the trouble. They were also the victims of a number of crimes. During the months of peace, thirty-eight defendants were involved in cases where a sailor, seaman, Chelsea pensioner, gunner, officer, or some other person connected to sailing or military work (temporary people who we might assume are in town as a result of the declaration of peace) was listed as a victim. That number is three times as many as were explicitly mentioned as defendants, and is a noticeable spike year-on-year that dissipates almost immediately when the war resumes in May 1803. Identifying Irish victims is particularly challenging, because there are no corroborating records such as the *Middlesex Criminal Registers* with which to link these people to a place of birth. Of these crimes, a majority (twenty-four) were committed by strangers to the victim. Tales such as that of Joseph Driver, robbed of his effects by a fellow-lodger who absconded the next morning are typical of those involving demobilised victims.<sup>80</sup> If locals defending their turf were quick to turn to the law, it would seem so too were the members of the military who found themselves duped or victimised by a cunning Londoner. The courtroom

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<sup>78</sup> For a full list, see: 'June 1802, trial of John Lee (t18020602-60)'; 'July 1802, trial of Robert Coombes, (t18020714-26)'; 'July 1802, trial of James Dempster (t18020714-40)'; 'July 1802, trial of John De Costa (t18020714-79)'; 'September 1802, trial of Francis Waldon (t18020918-160)'; 'October 1802, trial of William Jones and John Smith (t18021027-131)'; 'January 1803, trial of John Stevens (t18030112-101)'; 'April 1803, trial of Peter Weaver (t18030420-107)'; 'May 1803, trial of Richard Johnson (t18030525-25)'; 'May 1803, trial of William Davis (t18030525-28)'; 'May 1803, trial of John Price (t18030525-53)', *OBPO*.

<sup>79</sup> 'September 1802, trial of Francis Waldon (t18020918-160)'; 'October 1802, trial of William Jones and John Smith (t18021027-131)'; 'January 1803, trial of John Stevens (t18030112-101)', *OBPO*.

<sup>80</sup> 'May 1803, trial of John Price (t18030525-53)', *OBPO*.

was the place to play out disputes between strangers, just as it was the domain of employers seeking to teach an employee a lesson.

Only one of the twelve men identified as an ex-military defendant by the XML tags was described specifically as demobilised: Scotsman, John Lee, who had been 'discharged from the marines' and very soon thereafter was arrested for stealing a pile of clothes from a fellow lodger in Little Windmill-street in the west end.<sup>81</sup> Amongst these twelve soldiers and sailors, none are from London according to the *Middlesex Criminal Registers*. Only two are Irish-born: sixteen year old Francis Walden, accused of stealing a metal watch from an officer in the Royal navy and twenty-five year old 'recruit' Richard Johnson, who allegedly stole from an officer at a public house.<sup>82</sup> Yet many soldiers and sailors have been missed; a closer look at the trials during this period reveals several more men connected to the military, demonstrating a great weakness in relying solely on the XML occupation tags. Amongst those missed by the taggers is James Dempster, who was accused of using his military hat to conceal the child's dress that he was attempting to steal.<sup>83</sup>

Others missed were involved in cases of violence. Though the number of violence cases was low throughout the period, they were highest during the months of demobilisation (Figure 8.8). Men between the ages of 16 and 45 convicted of highway robbery account for the bulk of the rise of this class of crime during the months of demobilisation, with a number of them explicitly described (or describing themselves as ex-soldiers). For example, John Henton and William Merritt were convicted of putting Alexander Williams and his brother in fear of their lives on the King's highway in April of 1802. Williams noted that the men were 'dressed as soldiers' and that Henton had attacked the pair with a bludgeon, before robbing them of their hat and gloves, and some money.<sup>84</sup> Henton and Merrit were not the only soldiers caught committing highway

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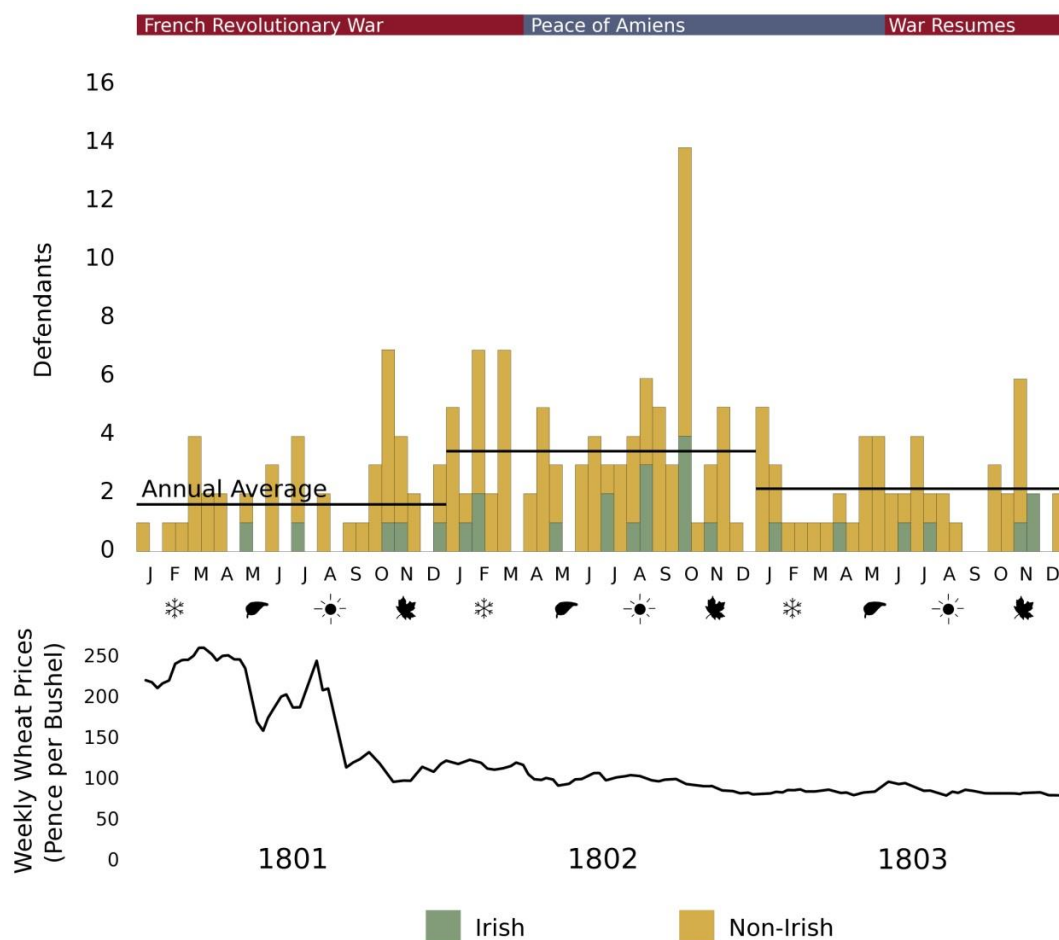
<sup>81</sup> 'June 1802, trial of John Lee (t18020602-60)', *OBPO*.

<sup>82</sup> HO 26, Middlesex (1802), Page 114; HO 26, Middlesex (1803), Page 39.

<sup>83</sup> 'July 1802, trial of James Dempster (t18020714-40)', *OBPO*.

<sup>84</sup> 'June 1802, trial of John Henton and William Merrit (t18020602-18)', *OBPO*.





**Figure 8.8: Violence-related prosecution rates and wheat prices 1801-1803.**

Irish and non-Irish defendants tried for violence-related crimes at the Old Bailey by the date of crime, as well as the weekly price of wheat in pence per imperial bushel.

robbery during the peace. Walter Bond admitted he had recently ‘belonged to the Monarch Indiaman’, a ship in the fleet of the East India Company, ‘and have just come home’.<sup>85</sup> And John Holmes, a soldier, was convicted of robbing a drunken woman in Limehouse by the name of Elizabeth Plummer.<sup>86</sup>

The period of demobilisation had the highest conviction rates for cases of violence, rising nearly a tenth to fifty-six in every hundred. During this three-year period, demobilisation was the only time when a majority of defendants in

<sup>85</sup> ‘September 1802, trial of Walter Bond (t18020918-122)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>86</sup> ‘September 1802, trial of John Holmes (t18020918-157)’, *OBPO*.

violence cases were found guilty.<sup>87</sup> The rise in conviction rates is a unique characteristic of the demobilisation period. An important explanation for this rise seems to be a small number of over-zealous prosecutors. Securing a conviction for highway robbery came with a reward of £40, and it may have been that some victims decided to try their luck, pushing for a more profitable conviction to that which they were entitled. We see evidence of this in the higher than usual number of highway robbery cases that end in convictions for lesser charges, such as William Marshall, who admitted to the theft but noted, 'I made use of no violence, nor put the prosecutor in bodily fear'.<sup>88</sup> Marshall likely knew that a conviction for theft would spare his life, whereas a conviction for highway robbery would see him hanged. His admission paid off, and he was instead sentenced to seven years transportation. Marshall was one of nineteen men accused of highway robbery during the demobilisation period who were convicted of lesser charges. By comparison only fourteen were convicted of the more serious charge. Combined with the evidence of soldiers committing this type of crime mentioned above, this increase in convictions for lesser offences suggests a change in the way locals were approaching these types of robberies during the demobilisation period.

Reports of Irish felonious crime – both theft and violence – are highest during the months of demobilisation, increasing by eighty-two per cent over the months of dearth.<sup>89</sup> By anyone's standards an eighty-two per cent rise in crime should be cause for alarm. The surge in conflicts is perhaps not surprising, as the Irish made up a significant proportion of the troops in the rank-and-file.<sup>90</sup> Many of these troops ended up at least temporarily in London while they decided what to do next, and any wishing to claim a pension from the Chelsea Hospital had to present themselves for inspection, making London a crucial stop for a huge number of Irish and non-Irish ex-service men.<sup>91</sup> Some of these Irish men are

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<sup>87</sup> The number of guilty defendants per period are as follows: price crisis: 5 out of 23 (22 per cent), demobilisation: 49 out of 88 (56 per cent), remobilisation: 15 out of 32 (47 per cent).

<sup>88</sup> 'September 1802, trial of William Marshall (t18020918-40)', *OBPO*.

<sup>89</sup> 158 defendants were identified as Irish during the fourteen months of demobilisation, compared to 53 defendants during the eight months of high prices.

<sup>90</sup> Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army', 32, 56.

<sup>91</sup> See Nielsen, 'Disability, Fraud, and Medical Experience'.

obviously soldiers or sailors, despite the lack of a relevant XML tag. Irish-born John M'Leod noted in his defence that he had "been in his Majesty's service nine years, and would not disgrace the cloth of a soldier by stealing". Charles O'Connor had only recently been in the area, having 'just come over from the East Indies'. William Kirvin had been "forty years in his Majesty's navy". George Steward had 'been at sea eight years'. Francis Waldon was 'a midshipman in the Navy'. Edward Coates, referred to 'a shipmate of mine' in his defence. And the trial accounts of John Connor, who, along with three other men, was tried in three separate burglary cases in December of 1802, includes a number of questions from the prosecutors that attempt to determine if the men were 'shipmates' of one another.<sup>92</sup>

However, as with the English population, usually we do not get explicit detail about whether or not a given individual was part of that demobilised hoard. Irish speaking Edward Foley's case gives us only small clues. Foley met his victim, John Sole, at a pub along Ratcliffe highway in August of 1802. Sole noted that he did not know the prisoner; rather, 'the prisoner was drinking and smoaking with my two friends' and managed to isolate his target before attacking him and stealing his watch.<sup>93</sup> Foley, whose Irish friends helped him get away briefly, claimed in his defence that he had pawned the watch 'for a woman, whose husband is at sea'. We do not know what line of work Foley was in (if any), neither does the corresponding description in *The Times* offer any additional detail.<sup>94</sup> But nothing in this tale suggests he was not a sailor like his friend's husband. Neither does it confirm anything. Foley was typical of Irish defendants during the months of peace: often a stranger, with few personal details provided in the written record. Half of the theft trials involving Irish male defendants include no detail at all that tells us about the relationship between the victim and

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<sup>92</sup> 'September 1802, trial of Francis Waldon (t18020918-160)'; 'October 1802, trial of Edward Coates (t18021027-61)'; 'October 1802, trial of Michael Welch and John M'Leod (t18021027-66)'; 'October 1802, trial of Charles O'Connor (t18021027-90)'; 'December 1802, trial of William Kirvin and Mary Connor (t18021201-11)'; 'January 1803, trial of Richard Hafford, John Connor, William Mines, Benjamin James (t18030112-54)', *OBPO*.

<sup>93</sup> 'September 1802, trial of Edward Foley (t18020918-38)', *OBPO*.

<sup>94</sup> 'Old Bailey'. *The Times* [London, England] 20 Sep. 1802: 3. *The Times Digital Archive*.

the defendant. Only 13 out of 58 such defendants were clearly known to their victim.

The type of crime is also an important clue. Animal theft, which Douglas Hay noted was typically associated with periods of dearth, was also on the rise during the months of demobilisation. The category 'animal theft' really incorporates two distinct activities best exemplified by sheep stealing and horse theft. Hay noted that dearth typically led to an increase in sheep stealing, but not of horse theft. Sheep stealing – or perhaps more accurately, theft of small edible animals (sheep, pigs, birds, rabbits) – was a form of subsistence crime, as it was presumed the culprit intended to eat the animal. Trial accounts show that this was quite often the case, as entrails and skins were quickly discarded so that the animal could not be identified by its markings.<sup>95</sup> The courtroom of the early nineteenth century depended heavily on the prosecutor being able to prove that the missing item was unquestionably *their* missing item. One unlucky owner who lost three lambs even went to the effort of demonstrating that the skins he found discarded fitted the carcasses discovered in possession of the accused.<sup>96</sup> Horse theft (or theft of bovines and asses) on the other hand, was an activity dominated by experienced criminal gangs. These gangs knew to quickly abscond the stolen animals out of the county, where they could be sold with relatively little risk. Only amateurs dared to try and sell a horse too close to home, where it might be recognised.<sup>97</sup>

Though the rates of prosecuted horse thefts were absolutely constant between each period, we do see a notable increase in accusations of sheep stealing during the price crisis. While there was also a rise in subsistence animal theft that correlates with demobilisation, it was more pronounced in 1801. A rise in complaints of sheep theft during a period of dearth maps well onto Douglas Hay's work, which suggested that during periods of high prices, some families were tempted by need to commit crimes they would not otherwise perpetrate, while at the same time, farmers and drovers were eager to prevent loss to theft

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<sup>95</sup> 'January 1801, trial of Joseph Kemp, Robert Burgess, John Hale (t18010114-68)', *OBPO*.

<sup>96</sup> 'May 1801, trial of John Witton, John Pavely (t18010520-60)', *OBPO*.

<sup>97</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, 167–169.

by prosecuting those they could catch.<sup>98</sup> However, demobilisation leads to a shift in the types of edible animals stolen. When the prices were at their peak, there was a preference for sheep and pigs versus birds, suggesting people may have been after a bigger meal with which to feed their family, or as in the case of William Clark, were stolen to sell for a decent profit.<sup>99</sup> By comparison, thefts of birds such as ducks and chickens were more common during demobilisation, which may have made a good dinner for a hungry soldier passing through, but was not worth the risk for a desperate parent with children to feed.<sup>100</sup> Those who were charged with bird-theft of course represent a small minority of those who committed the crime. John Freeman, a farmer who kept fowls in Newington Green, north of London, complained in December 1802 that ‘a great many other people round the country had lost fowls’.<sup>101</sup> Newington Green was still rural at this time, and rested just off the Kingsland Road heading north out of the City of London towards Hertfordshire, making the local farmers vulnerable to opportunistic passers by, who seemed to multiply during this period of demobilisation.

Farmers in Walthamstow, Hendon, and South Mimms, all of which are similarly situated beyond the northern fringes of London, instigated similar trials to protect their livestock from those coming to or from the capital in the months of peace.<sup>102</sup> Protecting property became a common problem in 1802-1803. William Oliver of Mile End complained of ‘many robberies in the neighbourhood’, noting that a person now slept in the house in the garden to protect against opportunists looking for something to steal.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Hay, ‘War, Dearth and Theft’, 132.

<sup>99</sup> ‘May 1801, trial of William Clarke (t18010520-65)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>100</sup> Based on: searches of all offences where the offence category is ‘animalTheft’, between January 1801 and April 1804, *OBPO*. Results manually checked and crimes tallied that were committed during the desired periods.

<sup>101</sup> ‘April 1803, trial of William Fletcher (t18030420-3)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>102</sup> ‘December 1802, trial of John Cordell (t18021202-70)’; ‘February 1803, trial of John Sibley (t18030216-40)’; ‘May 1803, trial of George Flamstead (t18030525-58)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>103</sup> ‘January 1803, trial of Richard Hafford, John Connor, William Mines, Benjamin James (t18030112-55)’, *OBPO*.

If animal theft and the workhouse set apart conflicts during price crises, then violence did the same for demobilisation (see Figure 8.8 above). Violence prosecutions represented only a small fraction of cases that were heard before the Old Bailey, and thus when plotted on the graph show much wilder swings than do theft cases. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that high prices had very little impact on the number of people charged with violence. On the other hand demobilisation led to an increase in such cases. Even excepting the anomalous spike in October of 1802, the connection between demobilisation and increased accusations of violence persists. There was a slight rise in killing cases. In particular, there are noticeable rises in the number of highway robbery offences appearing before the court during the spring and summer, which as mentioned in the previous chapter, is not the traditional time one would expect to find highway robbers.<sup>104</sup> The roads surrounding London became more dangerous during the months of peace. By comparison, violence was at its lowest during the price crisis – marginally lower even than during the other months of war in the period. We might conclude then that people were not disproportionately violent when they were hungry, but they were when they came back from war. Readers will not likely be surprised to hear that a return of thousands of soldiers led to an increase in civilian violence cases. The work of a soldier is violent, and they are employed to solve problems with force. Without training, or a period of adjustment, it is reasonable to assume some continued to approach their day-to-day problems in the same manner. Had these men lived in the twentieth century, some of them may have been diagnosed with ‘shell shock’. In the twenty-first we call it combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This mental illness was not diagnosed in the early nineteenth century, but modern medical research into American and British war veterans of Vietnam and Iraq suggests the rates of suffering may have been between 2 and 17 per cent of soldiers.<sup>105</sup> PTSD combined with alcohol abuse or financial instability has been shown to lead to a marked increase in violence and aggression amongst decommissioned

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<sup>104</sup> There were 34 defendants accused of highway robbery in the spring and summer of 1802, compared to 12 the previous year.

<sup>105</sup> Lisa K. Richardson, B. Christopher Frueh, Ronald Acierno, ‘Prevalence Estimates of Combat-Related PTSD: A Critical Review’, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44 (2011), 4-19.

soldiers.<sup>106</sup> When we combine this knowledge with the size of the Irish contingent in the British army who found themselves in London, PTSD may have more to do with the Irish male reputation for violence in the nineteenth century than we had previously recognised.

Other evidence, such as patterns in the place of birth of defendants, their age profile, and an increase in the proportion of people of unknown employment all point to evidence of demobilisation's effects on London. Mathew Predergrast, who testified in an infanticide case, noted before the court in 1815, 'At the time this happened [the crime], I belonged to the 77<sup>th</sup> regiment of foot, now I am a taylor'.<sup>107</sup> Predergrast could easily have just told the court that he was a tailor, which would have been true, but which would have hidden the characteristic that most interests us in this study. To rely solely on explicit mention of soldierliness risks missing men like him. Instead, we must also consider proxy evidence. On an individual level these weak markers may not be enough to identify ex-servicemen; however, demographic swings that are unique to the demobilisation period can offer stronger evidence of the scale of demobilisation's effects on crime in London.

For example, there is a rise in defendants of soldiering age. The number of young adults (16-24 years old) rises during the months of peace from 9.6 defendants per month to 14.5. Those aged 25-39 also rises by a similar margin, whereas older defendants remain relatively stable. When the war resumes, the number of male defendants in these age brackets accused of theft drops in half. There is also a shift in where defendants were born, which suggests outsiders were to blame for much of the increased conflict. During demobilisation, sixty-five percent of defendants in theft and violence cases were born somewhere further afield than London, Middlesex, or Surrey. By comparison, it was sixty-two per cent after remobilisation, and only fifty-nine per cent during the price crisis. These numbers imply that when the local population was affected by cost of living

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<sup>106</sup> Eric B. Elbogen, Sally C. Johnson, H. Ryan Wagner, Connor Sullivan, Casey T. Taft, Jean C. Beckham, 'Violent Behaviour and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in US Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, (2014), 1-8. DOI: 10.1192/bjp.bp.113.134627.

<sup>107</sup> 'January 1815, trial of Catherine Tewner (t18150111-44)', *OBPO*.

crises, crimes were between locals, whereas that was not necessarily the case when an influx of outsiders were introduced into the community.

The number of defendants with a known occupation also drops in real terms during the months of peace, and instead the court turns a greater proportion of its energy to people of 'unknown' employ. The shift is so dramatic in fact, that when remobilisation occurs, the proportion of 'unknowns' in theft cases drops from 68 per month to only 44. That suggests that the number of disputes involving a defendant unknown to the victim rises considerably during the short period of peace in 1802 and early 1803.

In most cases, a close reading simply fails to discount men as ex-servicemen. Twenty-five-year-old John Linton's trial account notes he was a fellow lodger of the victim and had been for a fortnight.<sup>108</sup> That neither confirms nor denies his connection to the military. Often, at best, we get only a hint of a military connection, such as in the case of William Lowe, accused of tricking a shop keeper into giving him some muslin on credit. During their exchange, Lowe asked the shopkeeper if there was "an army agent's office in the neighbourhood", implying he was an officer, and therefore that he could be trusted on his word.<sup>109</sup> Whether he actually was an officer, or if this question was merely part of his fraud, we cannot tell from the written record. Others, such as James Kennedy, John M'Donald, or William Carr, were young men out late at night who asked their victim to treat them to a drink, before accosting them in the street.<sup>110</sup> No reference is made to their connection (or lack of connection) to the military. However it is clear that the spring and summer of 1802 was fraught with idle men, many of whom were intoxicated, accosting locals that they had not previously met. Unlike during the months of dearth, all of the evidence suggests that Irish men were a proportionate fraction of that increase in crime reporting. Demobilisation clearly led to an increase in Irish men who found themselves

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<sup>108</sup> 'September 1802, trial of John Linton (t18020918-104)', *OBPO*.

<sup>109</sup> 'April 1802, trial of William Lowe (t18020428-93)', *OBPO*.

<sup>110</sup> 'July 1802, trial of James Kennedy (t18020714-21); 'July 1802, trial of John M'Donald and William Carr (t18020714-30)', *OBPO*.



involved in felonious conflicts that were in many ways similar to those experienced by English returning soldiers.

### ***Remobilisation and the Irish (1803)***

The peace was not to last. On 6 March 1803, Prime Minister Henry Addington wrote a letter to the King urging him to convene a council the following day ‘in consequence of the military preparations which are now carrying on in the ports of France and Holland’ that Addington perceived as a threat to British security.<sup>111</sup> Addington’s worries proved correct, and as of 18 May 1803 the British and French were again at war. Many of those soldiers and sailors who had struggled to occupy themselves for the past year found themselves again needed. They headed to London or Portsmouth, depending on their orders, where they boarded the ships that would remove them from the capital for another decade.

Among those extracted from the capital were those who found themselves victims of the press gang, such as Cork-born Thomas Burgess, whose Irish wife claimed he was taken by a London based gang in June of 1803, leaving her destitute in the capital.<sup>112</sup> Just as the arrival of the soldiers is marked by the beginning of rising theft reporting, so too was the remobilisation of these men met with its decline, with a remarkably strong correlation between the two phenomena. June 1803, the month of remobilisation, marks the lowest number of reported thefts in the three-year period.

While the number of Irish defendants during this three-year period was highest during the months of demobilisation, what is most interesting is that we see more Irish defendants *after* remobilisation than we saw in early 1801 when the English were flooding into the workhouses and desperately committing subsistence crimes. As mentioned, 9.7 Irish criminals per month appear in the record after remobilisation, compared to only 6.2 during the earlier dearth. The rise in Irish troublemakers is what Edward Tufte calls a ‘ratchet effect’, when

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<sup>111</sup> “Henry Addington to the King, 6 March 1803”, *The Later Correspondence of George III*, 82.

<sup>112</sup> LMA, *Examination of Paupers 1808-15, St. Botolph Aldersgate*, P69/BOT1/B/042/MS01469/001, Settlement Examination of Julia Burgess, 10 January 1805.

post-crisis conditions fail to shrink back to their pre-crisis levels.<sup>113</sup> This is distinct from the non-Irish population, as the number of defendants declined below the price-crisis level, where it stayed for the better part of the next decade. If we account for the extra 100,000 inhabitants living in London by 1811, prosecutions per capita amongst the non-Irish showed a sustained decline.

We have no way of knowing the number of Irish soldiers and sailors who spent 1802 and the early months of 1803 in the capital. All we do know is that it was 'some', and more likely 'a lot'. Not all of these soldiers and sailors rejoined the military in 1803; many would have been unfit for service, either through age or injury. Some of them stayed in the London area permanently, settling as best they could. These men became new nodes in the Irish communities upon which others could attach themselves when arriving from abroad. They included men such as Richard Burk, the keeper of a lodging house, whose 'relation', the Irish-born William Burk, had lived with as a lodger in July 1801, before the pair fell out and William was accused of theft.<sup>114</sup> As John Mannion and others have argued, those nodes in the network such as Richard Burk, were a strong pull factor for others seeking to venture into unfamiliar territory.<sup>115</sup>

The government was curiously silent on the problems caused by demobilisation. When it did intervene, it was rarely to promote the interests of the soldiers and their families. That is not to say that such interventions never happened. In June of 1802, in gratitude for long-standing service to the crown, the government passed an act that allowed members of the armed forces who had been in service since 1784 to practice trades.<sup>116</sup> Though that policy would have excluded the Irish Catholics, who had only been – officially – allowed to join from 1794, the act was surely an attempt to address the problem of demobilisation and so many idle hands. Unfortunately it was too little to address such a large problem.

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<sup>113</sup> Edward Tufte, *Envisioning Information* (1990), 107.

<sup>114</sup> 'July 1801, trial of William Burk (t18010701-19)', *OBPO*.

<sup>115</sup> John J. Mannion, 'Old World Antecedents, New World Adaptations: Inistioge (Co. Kilkenny) Immigrants in Newfoundland', *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, 5 (1989).

<sup>116</sup> 'An Act to enable such Officers, Mariners, and Soldiers...' *The London Gazette*. 22 June 1802.

That act was unusual. More typical are acts that promote the needs of merchants or the middle class, such as the 'Act for increasing the Rates of Subsistence to be paid to Innkeepers and others, on quartering Soldiers' passed in May 1803.<sup>117</sup> Or warnings to the poor, such as the one published in November 1802, just months after the peace was signed, noting that due to pressures on Chelsea 'out pensions', the government required all those in receipt of the pension who were living in Ireland to present themselves to the Lord Lieutenant or risk losing their allowance altogether. The warning was published in the *London Gazette*, and one can only suspect not all Irish pensioners received the message, which was perhaps as the government had intended.<sup>118</sup> The Irish too were left out of the 1803 'An Act for the Relief of Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines, and of the Wives of Soldiers in the Cases therein mentioned, so far as relates to England'.<sup>119</sup> It is notable that the Irish in particular were singled out to have their social support threatened, and this certainly suggests that feelings of national unity had not yet solidified, despite the Union of Parliaments the previous year. This warning to the Irish is also in contrast to the King's attitude towards the Dutch troops who had participated in the war with the French, and who were now unable to return home for fear of their safety. In a letter to Lord Weymouth, the King noted that he hoped 'Lord Hobart has arranged the business of the Dutch troops which have been employed during the war *with becoming liberality* [my emphasis]. This is truly due to them, as they have forfeited all hopes of returning to their native country.'<sup>120</sup> That encouragement of 'liberality' may have been the sentiments of a monarch out of touch with the realities of the nation's economy, but it is quite a disparity from the warning mentioned above, also written in the King's name, but targeted at the Irish pensioners who too had served the Crown.

The pattern of **Dearth → Demobilisation → Remobilisation** exhibited unique characteristics for the Irish in London. Firstly, counter to reason, it would appear

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<sup>117</sup> 'An Act for increasing the Rate of Subsistence to be paid to Innkeepers and others, on quartering Soldiers', *The London Gazette*. 17 May 1803.

<sup>118</sup> 'War Office' *The London Gazette*. 4 December 1802.

<sup>119</sup> 'An Act for the Relief of Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines, and of the Wives of Soldiers in the Cases therein mentioned, so far as relates to England', *The London Gazette*. 24 July 1803.

<sup>120</sup> "The King's Reply, Weymouth, 16 July 1802", *The Later Correspondence of George III*, ed. A. Aspinall (Cambridge, iv, 1968), 41.

that the period of dearth in the winter of 1801 affected the group only slightly, which is surprising given the Irish reputation for slum dwelling and poverty. This reinforces the importance of the conclusion from the previous chapter that seasonal cycles of migrant labour kept London's Irish population down during the winter. Secondly, at a time when it would appear that the Irish population was declining in London – or at the least not growing noticeably – demobilisation introduced hundreds if not thousands of Irish men into London who may not ever have intended to settle in the city. These men, including those mentioned above, were left in the capital rather than drawn to it. Those same seasonal cycles of migrant labour led to temporary rises in the size of the Irish population in London, and a different cycle caused by demobilisation helped the Irish population to swell yet again. The swelling was not fluid; rather, it rose in steps. Demobilisation was a catalyst for migration that diversified the population of major cities like London whether anyone wanted it to or not. In this case it increased the number of Irish in the capital. The English in London may not have liked sharing the city with their Irish neighbours; however, ironically it was a decision made in Westminster, rather than one made by individuals in Ireland, that demobilised troops en masse and overwhelmingly in London, and led to this unwanted influx of Irish in the capital. This has important implications for understanding the tension between the groups, and the sympathy we might afford some Irish migrants. If these demobilised soldiers had been unwilling migrants, or at the very least unintentional, then the English leaders who had failed to provide a social support system for these men must shoulder the blame for the suffering they endured and caused in the capital. Contemporary newspaper appeals to aid the struggling Irish in London's rookeries have new meaning under these circumstances. Many Irish soldiers gave their lives for the crown, but that crown had only slums and community conflict awaiting them after the war.

### ***The End of Napoleon and Beyond (1814-1817)***

Fast-forward a decade to the end of the wars with the French, and many themes continue to ring true, but we also see a very different pattern emerge, not only

between the periods of war, peace, and dearth, but how these phenomena affect the Irish. As this period lacks linkable *Middlesex Criminal Registers* containing birthplace information, this section must rely much more heavily on keyword searching and surname analysis as the basis of identifying the Irish, than did the previous section. That means a smaller proportion of the Irish were identifiable, and therefore the findings are more speculative (though I am confident, within the limits of the methods and the sources). Without this methodology, very little can be said about Irish defendants in London after the fall of Napoleon, which may explain why the historiography is so silent on the matter.

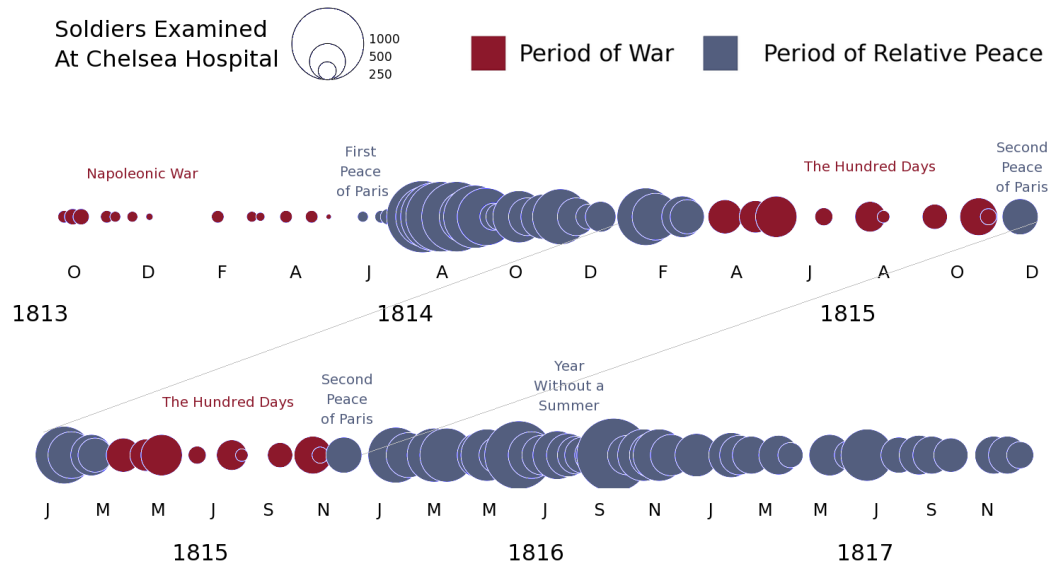
The defeat of Napoleon came in two stages: first in April 1814, when he was deposed by the French government and exiled to the small Mediterranean island of Elba; second, after his defeat at Waterloo in June 1815 and surrender to the British the following month. In between, Britain was in a state of uneasy peace with France for just under a year. Though the war with the Americans was officially still waging, the British took the opportunity to shed servicemen from the balance books. The navy dropped 50,000 men between December 1813 and the following August. Over a similar time frame, the army released roughly 40,000.<sup>121</sup> It was not long before many of them descended upon the capital (see Figure 8.9).

As in 1803, there was a brief delay between the coming of peace and the arrival of soldiers in London. According to the records of the Chelsea Hospital, the servicemen arrived *en masse* shortly before 26 July 1814, with nearly two-thousand men examined that week alone – roughly the same number as were examined in the previous five months combined.<sup>122</sup> Their arrival was fifty-six days after the signing of the First Peace of Paris, on 30 May 1814. That was slightly longer than the thirty-nine days witnessed in 1802. As can be seen in Figure 8.9, the influx of soldiers was regular and noteworthy throughout the

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<sup>121</sup> James, 'The Naval History of Great Britain', 497-500; 'Return of the effective strength, in the rank and file, of the regular and militia forces, on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1814', *HCP*, IX, 195 (1814-1815), 321; 'Return of the effective strength of the British army, in rank and file, in each year from the year 1804 to the year 1813, inclusive', *HCP*, XI, 16 (1813-1814), 269.

<sup>122</sup> WO116/15.



**Figure 8.9: Soldiers Examined at the Chelsea Hospital 1813-1817.**

Estimate of the number of soldiers examined by the Chelsea Hospital to determine eligibility for 'out-pensions'. Derived from WO116/15-22.

summer and autumn of 1814, slowing at the end of the year. According to those records, of the 40,000 released by the army, more than 12,000 men arrived in London seeking an army pension. Given the scale of people involved, it is surprising that we do not see more problems than we do.

Part of the explanation for the relatively small rise in crime may have to do with the options of poor relief and assistance for leaving town that were available to soldiers and sailors. Indoor relief was typically reserved for locals, so we would not necessarily expect to find a sharp rise in workhouse admittances with the coming of demobilisation. The number of paupers entering the workhouse per month in St Martin-in-the-Fields rose by less than five per cent over the previous year, suggesting that those ineligible for local indoor relief were causing the increase in reported crime. On the other hand, the number of entrants with an Irish surname rose fifteen per cent – most of whom were women and children.<sup>123</sup> Out relief was another matter. The Parish of St. Sepulchre, in London, just down the road from the Old Bailey courthouse, kept a daily log of who had claimed out-

<sup>123</sup> Between May 1813 and April 1814, 897 paupers were admitted to the St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse, of whom 49 had Irish surnames. Boulton and Schwarz, 'St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse data'.

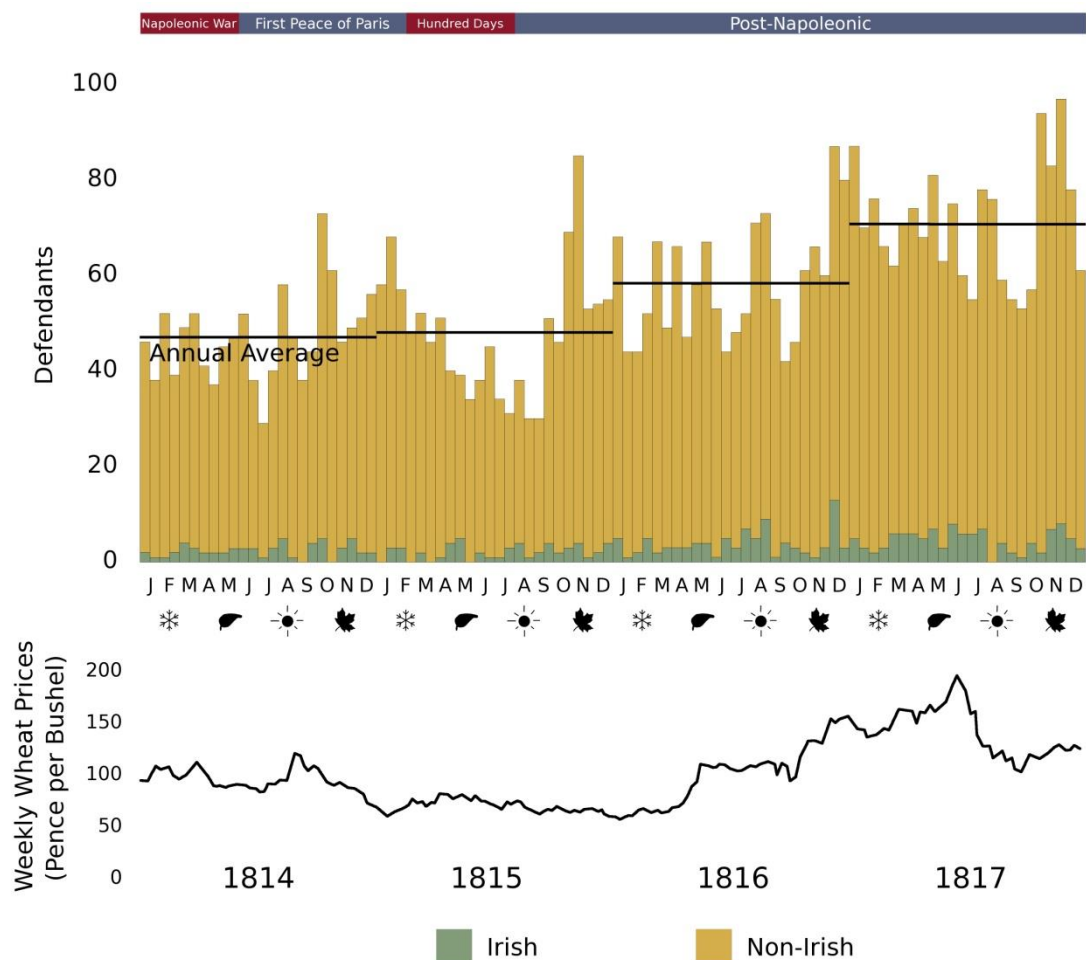
relief. Out-relief was available to those who had spent the previous night in the parish, and usually came with a payment of between 3*d.* and 1*s.* Most days, the parish gave out no out-relief; on a busy day it might see three. However, beginning in September 1814 there is a noticeable spike in requests, particularly for those that were seeking a 'pass' to somewhere else in Britain. These requests had almost entirely disappeared by January 1815, mapping exactly onto the demobilisation patterns seen in the Chelsea Hospital records. The first such entry with a connection to demobilisation came on 3 September, when 'a private soldier' was given 6*d.* This is followed by three sailors, given a 'pass to Bristol' on 22 September.<sup>124</sup>

A handful of the entries are explicitly Irish individuals – 'Tho Newdham. Wife & 3 Children pass to County of Carlow Ireland', 'David McMillan, pass to Liverpool for Dublin, discharged soldier', 'Soldiers wife and 2 children to Ireland'. Several others with particularly Irish names sought money for a pass to Bristol or Liverpool, which were obvious ports of call for those heading to Dublin or Cork. Some of these individuals may have been *en route* to Ireland. They include Jeremiah McCarthy (Bristol), 'Cath Gahagan – a soldier's widow and five children' (Liverpool), and John Ryan (Liverpool). These records are from a single London parish show that many soldiers intended to and did in fact leave the capital as soon as they were able. The out-relief offered by parishes such as St. Sepulchre gave at least some pauper soldiers and their families a way out the metropolis.

However, demobilisation also brings a rise in crime cases appearing before the Old Bailey. As in 1803, the result of demobilisation was an almost immediate increase in felonious indictments in London that maps precisely onto the arrival of the troops (see Figure 8.10). Theft cases were particularly low in early July, but shoot up noticeably at the end of the month at just the moment that the first troops arrived at Chelsea. The number of theft cases continues to rise throughout

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<sup>124</sup> LMA, P69/SEP/B/052/MS03243/001, 'Overseers' daily disbursements of poor relief: Saint Sepulchre, Holborn: City of London' 1814.



**Figure 8.10: Theft-related prosecution rates and wheat prices 1814-1817.**

Irish and non-Irish defendants tried for theft at the Old Bailey by date of crime, as well as the weekly price of grain in pence per imperial bushel.

the summer, before falling off in January. In the months between late July and December 1814, accusations of theft rose over the previous year.

Male defendants were solely responsible for the increased numbers. Across all theft cases, housebreaking, pocket picking, animal theft, and grand larceny stood out as problem areas.<sup>125</sup> As in 1803, there is a swelling in the number of defendants and victims who can be identified as soldiers, sailors, or similarly transient men connected to the war effort, caught by locals defending their turf against the onslaught of strangers and opportunistic, ephemeral Londoners.

<sup>125</sup> Based on an analysis of the *OBPO* for May 1813 to mid-February 1814. Housebreaking rose sixty per cent (2.00 per month vs. 1.26 per month), pocket picking was up seventeen per cent (12.00 vs. 10.26), animal theft up thirteen per cent (2.74 vs. 2.42), and grand larceny up nine per cent (53.47 vs. 48.66).



Using a combination of the XML occupation tags and close reading, forty-six cases give probable cause to believe that either the defendant or the victim is a member of the military. For some, they had scarcely been in London a moment before they got into trouble. John Mitchell told the court that he had just come ‘from Chelsea to get my discharge’, when, on January 20 1815, he stole Elizabeth Clark’s cloak from the line where it was drying. Like many soldiers in these months of demobilisation, Mitchell blamed drink for his lapse of judgment.<sup>126</sup> Sailor Robert Ruskin had only just arrived in London from Greenwich, when he was invited to dinner by a seemingly friendly stranger, who subsequently relieved him of his money.<sup>127</sup> In other cases, the crime was military-on-military. They include Chelsea out-pensioner Robert Dan, who was accused by fellow-out-pensioner Robert Roberts on the very day he had gone to Chelsea for his examination.<sup>128</sup> In most of those explicit cases, it is the victim rather than the defendant who has been recently demobilised.

Many of these men found themselves without friends to turn to for help. They were outsiders, like sailor Carl Plumbuck, who was convicted of burgling the house of Henry Harris in Whitechapel, late in 1814. Plumbuck noted in his defense: ‘I am a stranger here’, hoping that the jury would take into account the unique challenges new arrivals to the capital faced.<sup>129</sup> According to research by Australian genealogist James Hugh Donohoe, Plumbuck was a Lithuanian sailor – though Donohoe does not reference the source of that information.<sup>130</sup> Others too faced unique challenges. Henry Hart, sixty years of age, had devoted eighteen years of his life to service in the army before he was released and began to struggle. Hart had been convicted before, and Londoners proved unwilling to offer him a chance to make an honest living.<sup>131</sup> Accused of stealing six sheets in October 1814, Hart found himself in front of the jury, and delivered an impassioned speech, complaining of the lack of support he felt was available to him in the capital:

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<sup>126</sup> ‘February 1815, trial of John Mitchell (t18150215-114)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>127</sup> ‘September 1814, trial of Robert Ruskin (t18140914-76)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>128</sup> ‘September 1814, trial of Robert Roberts (t18140914-12)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>129</sup> ‘January 1815, trial of Carl Plumbuck (t18150111-6)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>130</sup> James Hugh Donohoe, *Stories and tales of the transported convicts*, (Sydney: 1990-2010).

<sup>131</sup> First conviction: ‘December 1807, trial of Henry Hart (t18071202-45)’, *OBPO*.

I applied to the society for the refuge of the destitute; it was too full to admit me. They furnished me with one pound; I went into the city; I was taken up by a police officer; it was impossible for me to get any employ, as my character was gone. Should I unfortunately be found guilty, I hope to be sent out of this country for ever, as I am certain I could not get my living in this country.<sup>132</sup>

The jury granted his wish, and two days later Hart was on a prison ship bound for Australia; it is unlikely that he ever returned.<sup>133</sup>

There are also a number of examples of soldiers or sailors billeted in London, such as James Spencer, who had been staying next door to his victim in February 1815.<sup>134</sup> Or a pair of soldiers billeted at the house of David Steers in September 1814 on the night his watch was stolen – quite probably by one of his guests.<sup>135</sup> Soldiers and sailors are often mentioned in the trial accounts in other roles during these months of demobilisation. Jarvis Warwick was a victim, robbed of his ‘bundle and stick’ after being ‘discharged from the 32<sup>nd</sup> regiment’ and ‘going home to my friends in Staffordshire’.<sup>136</sup> Sometimes soldiers even play a positive role in the case. Burglar John Varney was stopped by a soldier while attempting to abscond from the scene of his crime, as was the drunkard John Mitchell, mentioned above.<sup>137</sup> It is clear that at least in early 1815, the number of soldiers and sailors on the streets of London had increased dramatically.

Yet with few exceptions, these obviously demobilised men do not appear to be Irish. In January 1815, right at the tail end of the demobilisation, Irish-named Thomas Kelly admitted stealing indigo from the warehouses of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies, where he had been employed ‘since the last fleet came in’. Kelly told the court that he ‘took the Indigo to dye my clothes on my next voyage’; he had intended to find work in the

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<sup>132</sup> ‘October 1814, trial of Henry Hart (t18141026-25)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>133</sup> ‘Henry Hart’, *Founders and Survivors* (2014).

<http://foundersandsurvivors.org/pubsearch/convict/chain/ai30868>

<sup>134</sup> ‘February 1815, trial of James Spencer (t18150215-29)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>135</sup> ‘September 1814, trial of James Ragan (t18140914-83)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>136</sup> ‘February 1815, trial of William Taylor (t18150215-109)’, *OBPO*.

<sup>137</sup> ‘February 1815, trial of John Varney (t18150215-89)’; ‘February 1815, trial of John Mitchell (t18150215-114)’, *OBPO*.

merchant marine.<sup>138</sup> His description of his employment suggests that he may well have been a merchant sailor rather than someone arriving from a stint in the navy. Other seemingly Irish men charged with grand larceny give no clear hints of any connection to military life. James Ragan is about the only man *not* described as a soldier in his trial for stealing a watch in July 1814.<sup>139</sup> James Connor, a porter accused of stealing from his master in September 1814, had 'lived about ten months' with his employer, and could not have recently been discharged from the army or navy.<sup>140</sup>

Violence cases show a similar phenomenon. Reports of felonious violence increased across all defendants during the months of demobilisation, rising by eighty per cent, with much of that attributable to soldiers, people dressed like soldiers, or people of soldiering age. Male violence accounted for most of the change. Compared to theft, the number of violence-related cases was low, and thus shows wilder swings when shared as percentages; with this in mind, defendants involved in killing cases doubled, and those charged with wounding more than doubled. Highway robbery also saw a significant rise in reporting.<sup>141</sup> However, again, very little of that can be attributed to people who appear to be ex-military Irishmen – at least according to the accounts. Seventeen year-old David Kelly, accused of highway robbery in November 1814, told the court that he had been "at work at my father's at the time of the robbery", and from that account was almost certainly amongst the London-born Irish (or at least London-raised), rather than a recent migrant.<sup>142</sup> Fardy Carroll fits the profile of a soldier (26 year-old male), but the scant details of his life found in the accounts mean we can only conclude he was a young man in search of a prostitute.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> 'February 1815, trial of Thomas Kelly (t18150215-20)', *OBPO*.

<sup>139</sup> 'September 1814, trial of James Ragan (t18140914-83)', *OPBO*.

<sup>140</sup> 'October 1814, trial of James Connor (t18141026-28)', *OBPO*.

<sup>141</sup> The average number of defendants per month in violence-related cases during the demobilisation of 1814 was: Total (8.53, +80 per cent), Killing (1.79, +95 per cent), wounding (1.05, +152 per cent), highway robbery (3.58, +39 per cent). Irish defendants appeared an average of 1.05 (+25 per cent) times per month. Based on an analysis of the *OBPO*.

<sup>142</sup> 'January 1815, trial of David Kelly (t18150111-68)', *OBPO*.

<sup>143</sup> 'October 1814, trial of Fardy Carroll (t18141026-9)', *OBPO*.

From the accounts themselves, only a man named 'Patrick Smith' might be classified as Irish, and only on the strength of his forename, which was unusual amongst Englishmen, and is admittedly a stretch.<sup>144</sup> However, I get the sense that this lack of direct evidence of Irish crime linked to demobilisation is a limit of the accounts rather than a clean record amongst the Irish. For example, the corroborating description in *The Times* of Thomas Dooley's trial for highway robbery in September 1814 notes that 'Dooley is an Irishman' and that he and his accomplices were 'three soldiers'.<sup>145</sup> This suggests that from a distant reading point of view, a great service would be done if the owners of *The Times Digital Archive* worked together with the *Old Bailey Online* to make the trials cross-searchable.

Despite an inability to link the rise in Irish crime specifically to returning soldiers, it is clear that during the brief demobilisation of 1814, the Irish in London, along with thousands of others, felt the pressures of poverty at exactly the moment that we know large numbers of troops were entering the city. The government had not learned its lesson from previous demobilisations. As John Fortescue noted, members of the House of Commons struggled to realise that they were 'responsible for much of the evil which they condemned' by releasing so many men into the workforce at once.<sup>146</sup> For the Irish, this strain is visible through the rising number entering the workhouses and the increase in reports of subsistence crime. Subsistence crime takes many forms; the trial of John Connolly is a good example of that. Connolly was convicted of stealing a plane (a carpenter's tool), in July of 1814, telling the jury: 'I took the plane to get me a two-penny loaf; distress made me do it'.<sup>147</sup> The growth in reported violence, particularly highway robbery, suggests both heightened community tension, and a real problem of violence on the roads surrounding London.

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<sup>144</sup> 'October 1814, trial of Patrick Smith (t18141026-3)', *OBPO*.

<sup>145</sup> 'Old Bailey, Thursday Oct. 27.' *The Times* [London, England] 28 Oct. 1814: 2. *The Times Digital Archive*.

<sup>146</sup> J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Volume XI (1923), 53.

<sup>147</sup> 'July 1814, trial of John Connolly (t18140706-104)', *OBPO*.

The Irish appear to be over-represented in the various records left for historians, even if not always as soldiers or sailors. The fifteen per cent rise in Irish-named people entering the workhouse vastly exceeded the five percent growth in the wider population. Irish defendants in theft cases also rose approximately ten per cent more than did the non-Irish. However, evidence of Irish conflict is merely a slight amplification of what was going on in the wider population, and correlates directly to the return of soldiers and sailors. This extra crime attributable to demobilisation represents a few extra cases here and there, in both the Irish and non-Irish population. It is not a plague, but it is noticeable in both the statistics and the testimonies of the victims outlined throughout this chapter. Without knowing the proportion of ex-soldiers and ex-sailors in London who were Irish, we have no way of making claims about whether or not the Irish are definitively over-represented in these figures – particularly amongst the male theft instances. The Chelsea Hospital Examinations do provide some clues, and Irish soldiers presenting themselves at Chelsea Hospital for out-pensions were very high. On 16 November 1814, Irish soldiers accounted for approximately twenty per cent of the nearly 350 soldiers applying for a pension on that day alone.<sup>148</sup> The Irish may have been involved in a few more disputes here and there, but it would seem that being an Irish ex-soldier or ex-sailor in London in 1814 did not markedly change how the locals perceived you compared to a similar non-Irish ex-soldier or ex-sailor. Henry McAnally called the Irish militia a ‘nursery’ for the British regulars, accepting 28,499 Irish militiamen into its ranks between September 1806 and January 1813. By 1809 there were fifteen Irish regular battalions, which Terence Denman believes were almost entirely comprised of Irish soldiers; he estimates that three years later all regiments in the British army had a substantial Irish contingent.<sup>149</sup>



The demobilisation and its resultant poverty did not last for long. Life in the capital changed dramatically in February of 1815 as Napoleon slinked away from

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<sup>148</sup> WO 116/18.

<sup>149</sup> Denman, ‘Hibernia officina militum’, 165-166.

Elba and marched towards Paris to gather an army. Britain hastily remobilised and sent troops to Europe to intervene. The number of soldiers stationed on British soil dropped in half between December 1814 and June of the following year – the month during which Wellington met Napoleon at Waterloo. The number of infantrymen employed by the army grew by more than forty thousand, which was the same number who had been let go only months earlier.<sup>150</sup> The navy similarly swelled its ranks, welcoming back twenty thousand men.<sup>151</sup> That was enough to improve conditions on the streets of London. Reports of theft and violence immediately dropped below their 1813 level, aided both by the exodus of the servicemen, but also by the coming of spring. Irish defendants accused of theft-related crimes fell an additional tenth compared to their non-Irish counterparts, to only eighty-five per cent of the figures seen in 1813.

In 1815 remobilisation not only reduced reports of Irish crime, it did so dramatically. This points to the returning soldiers and sailors as the groups that should carry the bulk of the blame for the higher levels of Irish accused in 1814. This contradicts the evidence seen through a close reading of those defendants with Irish names. However, the reduction in Irish prosecutions after remobilisation reaffirms the hypothesis that demobilisation was unwittingly drawing the Irish to the metropolis, where many of them had few rights to the limited social security available in the early nineteenth century, and no significant social support network of friends or relatives. By dumping these Irish men in London, they were given an opportunity to build those networks, even if just for a few months. Their brief time in the capital after the first defeat of Napoleon may have given some Irish men a strong enough affinity for London that they decided to stay permanently after the final peace was signed. The government may have intended for soldiers and sailors to return home, and though we know that many did, some, including the Irish, did not.

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<sup>150</sup> The strength of the regular infantry rose from 129,000 to 160,000 in this period, with number of troops stationed in Britain dropping from 85,000 to 46,000. Sources: 'Return of the effective strength, in the rank and file, of the regular and militia forces, on the 25<sup>th</sup> June and 25<sup>th</sup> December 1814', *HCP*, IX, 7 (1814-15), 321; 'Return of the effective strength of the British Army, on the 25<sup>th</sup> June and 25<sup>th</sup> December 1815, serving at home and abroad', *HCP*, XII, 100 (1816), 421;

<sup>151</sup> James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, vol. VI, 505.

Exactly how many stayed in London is unclear, but between the army and navy's peak strength in September 1813 and the post-war month of January of 1816, the British forces collectively shed 191,000 jobs amongst the rank and file. Over the course of the next five years, the army would release a further 83,000 men, meaning more than 275,000 men descended upon the streets of Britain looking for work.<sup>152</sup> Douglas Hay's estimates of demobilisation put the figure at 350,000 servicemen; this number probably includes the reduction in local militia forces. Hay suggested 350,000 amounted to as much as thirty per cent of male households in the class from which the nation drew its sailors and soldiers.<sup>153</sup>

Another war of the magnitude of the Napoleonic Wars in which the British were involved would not appear for almost a century, meaning that the military would never again be a viable source of employment for most of these men. That meant a different line of work was needed. Sailors might be fortunate enough to find a place as a mariner on board a commercial vessel. Some soldiers had trades to which they could return, or farm fields waiting for them back home. But for thousands more there was no farm – perhaps not even a family. Many had nowhere in particular they felt inclined to go. For some, work in the army or navy was the only employment they ever had. Unlike in 1814, the Overseer's books from St. Sepulchre do *not* include significant evidence that pauper soldiers and sailors were seeking out-relief as a means to get home after the final defeat of Napoleon.<sup>154</sup> There are a few exceptions to that, but the same phenomenon is noticeably absent after 1815.

In July 1815, even before the surrender of Napoleon, sailors in London started getting concerned about their employment options. Nicholas Rogers recounts an attempt to rid the shipyards of foreign sailors, 'partly on the grounds that they

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<sup>152</sup> The army released 84,000 men and the navy 107,000. By December 1815 their strength stood at 176,000 and 33,000 respectively. By 1820 the army had only 93,000 men. 'Return of the effective strength of the British army, in rank and file, in each year from the year 1804 to the year 1813, inclusive', *HCP*, XI, 16 (1813-14), 269; *HCP*, XII (1816), 421; 'Return of the troops on foreign and home service, per latest returns; distinguishing India, England, Ireland, and Scotland; and the cavalry from the infantry', *HCP*, XV, 115 (1821), 103; James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, volume VI, 497 and 508.

<sup>153</sup> Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft', 138–139.

<sup>154</sup> LMA, "Overseers' daily disbursements of poor relief, Saint Sepulchre".

were suspected of accepting a reduction in wages that the employers were now offering in a buyer's market'.<sup>155</sup> These demobilised soldiers and sailors also found themselves competing with the thousands of workers whose industries went into decline with the end of the wartime economy. Many soldiers and sailors found few ways to convert the skills they learned in the army into paid employment in London. Of course that did not keep some people from trying. Soldiers began appearing on the streets of London in roles in which the people were not accustomed to seeing them, such as directing traffic or acting as personal bodyguards to officers.<sup>156</sup> The Royal Irish Constabulary, founded in 1814, provided employment for some of those men who made it back to Ireland.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, opportunities were scant, and even years later in 1822 a report on the state of mendicity in London complained that ex-sailors and soldiers still made up one of the largest groups of London's male beggars.<sup>158</sup> The long process of demobilisation after the Second Peace of Paris in November 1815, as seen in Figure 8.9 above, suggests that London may have found itself inundated with soldiers for much longer than it did in 1814.

As expected, the final peace in 1815 again led to a swelling of the city's gaols. Reports of theft rose by twenty-four per cent, with all the usual categories of crime standing out as problematic, and male defendants again to blame for the increase. In the year after Napoleon's fall, reports of felonious violence doubled, with both sexes to blame, and with highway robbery the biggest complaint (though the jury deemed most highway robbers not guilty, or guilty of a lesser crime), rising from two to eight defendants per month, on average. Irish defendants appeared sixty-five per cent more often than during the months of war.<sup>159</sup> In the workhouse, admittances were up a third across the board;

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<sup>155</sup> Nicholas Rogers, *The Press Gang: Naval Impressment and its opponents in Georgian Britain* (London: 2007), 122.

<sup>156</sup> Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, volume XI, 49–50.

<sup>157</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, 192.

<sup>158</sup> 'The Fourth Report of the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity' *Society for the Suppression of Mendicity*. (London, 1822), 6.

<sup>159</sup> Numbers of defendants per month in the year post Napoleon versus the months of war: Violence: All violence defendants (9.75, +100.6 per cent), highway robbery (8.00, +280 per cent), Irish violence (0.58, -30.7 per cent).



excluding children, the proportion of working-aged men included in those numbers rose by ten per cent.<sup>160</sup> By comparison, those with Irish surnames appeared eighty per cent more in the workhouse entry figures. One of those paupers was Henry Farrell, who arrived at the workhouse on 19 January 1816, and was discharged ten days later with a 'Permissive Pass to Liverpool on his way to Ireland'.<sup>161</sup> The rise in Irish paupers and defendants suggests that the Irish population was swelling in response to demobilisation.

Yet, as in 1814, the sources make it difficult to prove this demobilisation hypothesis via close reading. Some of these men were obviously connected to the military, including Irish-named Greenwich pensioner Dennis Connor, who admitted stealing a watch from a bed-ridden lodging house keeper in September 1815.<sup>162</sup> Connor seems to have been an opportunist. His fellow sailors, Englishmen William Williams and John Grey, complained they were 'distressed sailors' who 'have not eaten a bit for two days', when they were caught stealing apples from a market stall in October 1815.<sup>163</sup> Yet there are few other mentions of military service amongst these defendants in the months after Napoleon's fall. There are no explicit mentions of soldiers or sailors amongst those highway robbers. Of defendants in theft cases, they are typically male, and of the right age bracket to be ex-servicemen, but the increase in defendants in 1815 also resulted in shorter accounts, with less space devoted to describing the defendant. The mean length in words of an account in 1815 was 466 words, compared to 576 during the Peace of Amiens demobilisation period of 1802-1803.

This may be a result of a publishing change. From 1801 to 1805, Ramsay and Blanchard had inscribed the accounts, which were published by W. Wilson. However, by June 1815, J.A. Dowling was the scribe, and R. Butters the printer. The team changed again in December 1816, when Henry Buckler and T. Booth

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Theft: All theft defendants (105.83, +23.8 per cent), burglary (10.67, +58.3 per cent), housebreaking (2.50, +25.0 per cent), grand larceny (52.67, +15.3 per cent), pocket picking (12.17, +39.3 per cent), Irish theft (6.25, +64.9 per cent).

<sup>160</sup> Boulton and Schwarz, 'St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse data'.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, Archive Reference Number: F4081, UID: 67548.

<sup>162</sup> 'October 1815, trial of Dennis Connor (t18151025-21)', *OBPO*.

<sup>163</sup> 'October 1815, trial of William Williams and John Grey (t18151025-46)', *OBPO*.

took charge. Each of these combinations of scribes and printers left their own mark on the style of the *Proceedings*, and thus changed what information is available for historians.<sup>164</sup> Seemingly, Dowling and Butters were less verbose, which leaves us with fewer details about a defendant's back-story, and thus making it impossible to measure the extent to which any given trial was military-related crime. While the increase in prosecutions after the 1815 peace with France shares many of the same hallmarks of a society trying to manage a large-scale demobilisation, the silence of the accounts make it difficult to draw firm conclusions, particularly as they relate to Irish defendants. I would argue that we see continuity here, rather than change, but in terms of an attempt to verify a distant reading via a close reading, the limits of the sources seem to have denied that chance, if not outright refuted those findings.

During the period that followed the final defeat of Napoleon, the population had to deal not only with demobilisation, but before the economy had recovered on came two years of crushing dearth, caused by an extraordinary event on the other side of the world. On 5 April 1815, just as Napoleon was beginning his march on Paris, Mount Tambora in Indonesia began erupting. It was the biggest eruption in recorded history, dwarfing the event that buried Pompeii or the eruption of Krakatoa in 1883.<sup>165</sup> As Brian Fagan noted, Tambora produced so much ash that the sun rose through a red haze in 1816, and average temperatures in the summer of that year were 2.3 to 4.6 degrees Celsius colder than normal.<sup>166</sup> It took about a year before the full impact of the event was felt in Europe, but when it was, it had an intense effect on crop production for the next two years, causing food prices to double. During these two years, purchasing power in British families declined more so than at any other time during the previous two decades.

As coincidence would have it, this rise in the price of grain caused by the volcano corrected a two-year low in prices that had many farmers concerned about the

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<sup>164</sup> Huber, 'The Old Bailey Proceedings'.

<sup>165</sup> Stommel and Stommel, *Volcano Weather*, 3–7.

<sup>166</sup> Fagan, *The Little Ice Age*, 170.

economic viability of their industry.<sup>167</sup> Between January 1813 and January 1815 the price of wheat in Middlesex had declined by more than half, leaving many farmers worried.<sup>168</sup> The government's response to low bread prices was the Corn Laws, which were passed in 1815.<sup>169</sup> These laws limited imports of cheap foreign wheat until the price rose sufficiently to allow farmers to remain solvent. Thanks to Tambora and the subsequent failed harvests, the price recovered, marking good news for farmers, but trouble for the people of London who needed to find more money for bread in economically troubled times.

For those struggling to survive, the protectionist measures of the Corn Laws were an easy target for those seeking to explain the suffering. A letter published on 3 November 1816 in *The Examiner* complained bitterly that the government had sided with the producers at the expense of the people. The anonymous author warned that 'The Bill has produced a very pretty dearth this year by the help of a doubtful harvest; and next year, by the blessing of Heaven upon their laudable endeavours, if there should be another short harvest, it will have achieved an absolute famine'.<sup>170</sup> By mid-1816, Londoners were already struggling to adapt to a city inundated with demobilised servicemen and labourers who had been put out of work with the coming of peace.

From April 1816 to July of the following year the cost of living ticked up every month, almost without fail. The effects of this poverty were felt throughout the community. The workhouse at St. Martin-in-the-Fields saw a noticeable upswing in the number of young males, breaking the normal trend of females and children occupying an almost exclusive place inside its walls. Men between the ages of 15 and 44 presenting themselves to the workhouse increased by an average of fifteen per month between November 1816 and July 1817 – a six-fold increase in

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<sup>167</sup> Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, volume XI, 46.

<sup>168</sup> Brunt and Cannon, 'English Corn Returns', 318-339.

<sup>169</sup> For more on the Corn Laws and the reasons behind them, see: S. Fairlie, 'The Nineteenth-Century Corn Law Reconsidered' *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 18 (1965), 572-575.

<sup>170</sup> 'The Corn Bill', *The Examiner*, 3 November 1816, Issue 462, 700-701.

male entrants compared to 1813.<sup>171</sup> Paupers with Irish names were up nearly two and a half times in the same period. This is a very different pattern to that which we saw in 1801, when dearth was ravaging the city. The Irish at that time had seemingly been relatively unaffected by the earlier price crisis. But by 1816 the Irish are both affected, and it would seem, eligible for parish relief in much greater proportions than they had been previously.

Yet, many Irish immigrants worked as day labourers in poor paying jobs and thus struggled to meet these settlement requirements.<sup>172</sup> Those who repeatedly applied for poor relief without meeting the legal requirements would be taken up by the vagrancy system, gaoled, whipped, and finally sent back to Ireland on the back of a cart.<sup>173</sup> Thousands of paupers from across Britain and Ireland were expelled from London each year under these laws. The laws were intended to protect the limited assets of parishes, ensuring everyone looked after their own, and were built around the outdated early modern ideas of closed communities consisting of interdependent members. However, these laws had a real impact on the lives of those who found themselves unprotected. They included people like Robert Latham, who in 1810 complained that 'I belong to no parish; I could not get into any workhouse; I was born in the city of Dublin; I was drove to the greatest distress'.<sup>174</sup> Latham is characteristic of the failure of the state to account for failed migration.

The evidence of 1816 suggests that had begun to change. Many Irish in London had developed deeper roots in the community and were now eligible for at least temporary relief at the expense of the parish in addition to private charitable donations or wages they were able to scrape together. While there had always

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<sup>171</sup> The number of males aged 15-44 per month in the year preceding Napoleon's exile in Elba was 3.2 per month, compared to 18.2 per month between November 1816 and July 1817. Boulton and Schwarz, 'St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse data'.

<sup>172</sup> For more on settlement, see Anne Winter and Thijs Lambrecht, 'Migration, poor relief and local autonomy: Settlement policies in England the southern Low Countries in the eighteenth century', *Past & Present*, 218 (2013), 91-101; Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c.1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004); K.D. M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950* (Cambridge, 2006).

<sup>173</sup> Collins, 'Migrant Labour in British Agriculture', 50.

<sup>174</sup> 'July 1810, trial of Robert Latham (t18100718-24)', *OBPO*.

been a small permanent Irish population in the capital, this shows a marked shift in the commitment of the Irish to London, well before the influx of permanent migrants during the famine years of the 1840s and 1850s. We cannot assume that someone who had settlement in London intended to maintain a permanent relationship with the city, but it certainly is a good indicator.

Despite this change, there was still a large Irish population that did not have that permanent relationship with London. They were the temporary agricultural workers and labourers described in the previous chapter. Or, they were the demobilised soldiers and sailors who never managed to make it back home. Or they were the young men and women who decided to spend a year or two in the capital, aided by the improvements in travel that made the trip from Ireland much quicker and less expensive, particularly after commercial steam travel began in 1816.<sup>175</sup> Reports of crime during the months of dearth in 1816-1817 highlight the disproportionate rise of Irish defendants during this period. Incidences of reported Irish theft rose by 233 per cent, as compared to only 66 per cent in the wider population. That rate had nearly doubled on top of that seen during the post-Napoleonic demobilisation.<sup>176</sup>

The worse the price crisis got, the more Irish defendants appeared before the courts, rising at twice the rate of everyone else. And yet, at this time Irish violence all but disappears by comparison, with less than one defendant per month. By 1816 violence has lost its association with demobilisation, and the number of defendants being brought forth for violent crimes intensified as the economy worsened during the year without a summer, with highway robberies peaking during the price crisis at 392 per cent of their war-time levels. Factors in Ireland may also be to blame for the increased number of Irish defendants. Francis Morehouse reminds us that 1817-1818 was also a period of potato famine in Ireland, though not one on the scale of the 1840s.<sup>177</sup> Taken in light of the findings from the 1801 price crisis, which showed that violence declined

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<sup>175</sup> Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration', 370.

<sup>176</sup> Raw numbers of defendants per month during the price crisis of 1816-1817 compared to months of war: all Irish theft (5.72 per month, +133.54 per cent), all theft (103.58, +55.72 per cent). During the worst months of the price crisis those numbers rose amongst the Irish to (8.85, +172.69 per cent) and all defendants (133.10, +55.72 per cent).

<sup>177</sup> Morehouse, 'The Irish Migration', 579.

when hunger increased, this would suggest Irish poverty by 1816 has taken on a new, more prominent role in London society than it did at the turn of the century, and could help explain why Irish violence cases declined while theft cases increased.

An examination of theft trials certainly suggests Irish thefts by 1817 are linked to an impoverished, perhaps more permanent population. The average age of these Irish men drops to 24.7 years in 1817-1818, compared to 29.9 years in theft cases across the whole twenty-year period. Irish men, it would seem, were only slightly younger than the non-Irish, who averaged 26.2 years during the year without a summer. That makes the Irish part of a wider trend, rather than an anomaly. Young men like John Marney become the typical Irish defendant. Marney was arrested in July 1817 for stealing a handkerchief from the person of George Killick. Marney's haul – a single handkerchief – was hardly enough to tide him over for very long; we might classify this as subsistence crime. But more interesting was the testimony of witnesses, who noted that Marney had been in the company of three or four other men when he committed the crime.<sup>178</sup> Marney had friends, or at least acquaintances. That is not to say the Irish prior to 1817 always acted alone, or exhibited traits of friendlessness. It is however quite distinct from the strangers and friendless soldiers or sailors who appeared in greater numbers during breaks in the war. The city had weathered one storm, as it managed the demobilisation of thousands of servicemen, and found itself almost immediately weathering a second, with young men in particular turning to crime as prices rose.

The problem, at least as far as Irish defendants were concerned, had evolved between 1813 and 1817. The pattern: **Demobilisation → Remobilisation → Demobilisation → Dearth** had its own unique characteristics, but evoked a very similar response to that which occurred between 1801 and 1803. The coming of war drew young men out of the capital, and seemingly reduced serious conflicts accordingly. Demobilisation brought those men back, which led to rising pressures throughout the lower orders, sending women to the workhouse and

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<sup>178</sup> 'September 1817, trial of John Marney (t18170917-240)', *OBPO*.

men to the prisoner's box at the Old Bailey. Finally, dearth led to an increase in reports of subsistence crime, as we would expect. The fact that the biggest demobilisation Britain had ever known occurred at nearly the same moment as a global mega-volcanic eruption (and a deadly outbreak of Typhus), could be described as bad luck.<sup>179</sup> And yet it is these extraordinary moments that allow us to peer into the aggregated lives of ordinary people, to see how immigrant relations are affected both by moments of crises and moments of calm.

## ***Conclusion***

The simple distant reading that formed the basis for exploring demobilisation in particular, shows some interesting strengths and limits of the approach. A close reading of Irish involvement in demobilisation and responses to poverty was more successful in the earlier period (1801-1803) than it was in the later (1813-1817). The trial accounts do NOT support the conclusion that Irish demobilised soldiers were responsible for the rise in crime after the fall of Napoleon in 1815. This may be because they in fact were not responsible, or it may be due to the limits of the accounts, the limits of distant reading, and of surname analysis.

The greater successes in the earlier period was in part undoubtedly because of the linked *Middlesex Criminal Registers*, which made it possible to identify a much higher proportion of Irish defendants. This earlier period was more also more fruitful because the trial accounts from those years tended to provide more details about a defendant. The disappearance of the phrase 'a good character' after 1812, as well as the general shortening of accounts as the years pressed on, are good examples of how our evidence is sculpted by those who wrote it down. Scholars looking to use the *Proceedings* for distant reading or quantitative analysis should thus be wary of traversing boundaries where a new scribe or printer takes over.

*The Times* newspaper's online digital archive does contain useful additional details on a number of defendants – particularly in the later period when the

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<sup>179</sup> Fagan, *The Little Ice Age*, 178.

accounts themselves are quite terse. However, this resource is protected behind a paywall and access to the text-layer is currently restricted, meaning that a practical linking between the accounts on the *OBPO* and the extracts in *The Times* is not possible. The ability to do this linking on a large scale would provide a much better resource for conducting future distant readings, however it would require the cooperation of the commercial partners who have invested in keeping that resource locked down.

The process also could have been improved dramatically if the Registers of the Chelsea Hospital (WO 116) had been fully digitised. At the time of writing, these have been scanned and are available in portable document format (pdf) via the National Archives website. However, the texts are not searchable, and the handwriting is too challenging for an optical character recognition system to handle. That means these sixty thousand or so entries would have to be manually transcribed before they could be linked to the accounts of the *OBPO*, allowing us to identify even more soldiers in the *Proceedings*.

This experiment also showed the limits of the XML of the *OBPO*, particularly as it relates to finding the occupation of defendants and witnesses. While the work that has been done by the *OBPO* team on those tags is wildly impressive, scholars should not rely too heavily on these particular tags, as I was able to find a number of soldiers and sailors who had not been tagged as such. While the *OBPO* does accept suggested corrections to its XML and transcriptions, the mechanism for updating large numbers of occupation tags is quite limited at this stage.

Despite the shortcomings of the surname analysis tool in the latter period, it did provide considerable proxy evidence to help characterise the Irish experience in London at the end of the French Wars. Wider trends in prosecutions were visible because surname analysis gave us evidence to look at when the sources were silent on who was Irish and who was not. These wider trends in the 1810s mirrored what was seen in 1802-1803 when the evidence available for close reading was more robust, suggesting that the continuities found for the later period are trustworthy. The approach suggested, among other things, a more



permanent Irish population in the city by the latter 1810s than was seen when the Union of Parliaments took place in 1801. That is visible through growing numbers of Irish people seeking relief from the parish, and growing numbers of people with Irish names appearing in the various records more generally. That is difficult to measure without looking at surnames as a form of proxy evidence for the Irish, and while the methodology cannot isolate the recent migrants from the long-term residents, it does provide *a* picture of the Irish experience in London that is otherwise invisible.

This analysis has suggested that in many respects, the Irish in London were like other groups. When the cost of living rose faster than wages, they seemingly stole more. When the soldiers and sailors returned to London, changes in the reports of Irish violence largely conform to the increases we see in the wider population. This suggests that the Irishness of those individuals was secondary to their other characteristics, at least when it came to predicting the likelihood of and types of conflicts most liable to occur. From a conflict and resolution perspective, an Irish soldier was first and foremost a soldier when it came to the ways he tested the patience of the locals (or was seen as a potential target by a wily local). His Irishness may only have had a minor role, if any role at all, in the interactions he had that led to conflict. Instead, they are merely part of a specific group who was perceived as trouble-making, and suffered fairly proportionately as a result. Because the Irish are easier to identify, it is easy to assume that their Irishness was a factor in the prosecution. These figures suggest it was not their Irishness, but their connection to demobilisation or poverty that was the trigger. This conclusion dovetails with the conclusion in the previous chapter, that it was the *migrant* nature of Irish seasonal labourers rather than their *Irishness* that led to seasonal conflicts. This changes our current understanding of Anglo-Irish relations in the capital, particularly with respect to Irish nationalist history, which focuses on the oppression of the Irish. The findings of this chapter do support conclusions that the Irish in London suffered as a result of government mismanagement, but not that they were singled out for that suffering; instead they suffered alongside men and women who were in many respects just like them, but that had English, Welsh, or Scottish backgrounds.

Remobilisation and the subsequent drop in crime reporting (both Irish and non-Irish), reinforced contemporary beliefs that demobilisation had a negative impact on communities. But it also shows that removing temporary people largely solved any problems that their introduction into the community had caused. The problem was therefore reversible, except the solution was not sustainable. The war was bound to end eventually, and when it did, there was no strategy in place to help people adjust to London living, despite the fact that the French had developed a model of controlled demobilisation more than fifty years earlier, ensuring only those with jobs to return to were released from duty.

While the Irish reacted much as expected to demobilisation and remobilisation across the early nineteenth century, Irish responses to dearth in the capital showed stark differences. In 1801 the Irish show little evidence that they were heavily affected by the higher prices. The evidence suggests the permanent Irish population in the capital in 1800 was significantly lower and more involved in the seasonal migration discussed in the previous chapter, meaning periods of dearth that affected the capital most intensely could be avoided by those willing to return to Ireland and wait it out. Fifteen years later Irish involvement appeared to be the reverse of what it had been; by 1816 Irish defendants flooded into the Old Bailey in much greater numbers than we would expect, suggesting a much larger Irish permanent or semi-permanent (and perhaps younger) population in the city, as well as increased temporary workers getting on the nerves of the locals. The Irish in particular seem to have been more affected by the rise in wheat prices than they were by demobilisation. The reason for this might be the steamship, more so than the cost of living. Steamships first started making regular passenger journeys from Ireland in 1816, dramatically reducing the barrier to entry into London for the Irish. Arthur Redford argued that even beginning in the summer and autumn of 1815, the Irish brought droves of Irish cattle into England via Liverpool, Bristol and Welsh ports, and that in this post-Napoleonic Britain saw opportunity in London where before they may have stayed away to wait out the war.<sup>180</sup> Alternatively, it might have been a rise in economic migrants fleeing failed harvests in Ireland. In all probability the answer

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<sup>180</sup> Redford, *Labour Migration*, 138.

is likely that a little bit of all of these factors played a part. Whatever the cause, in those fifteen years, all accounts of the Irish in London suggest that the average number of Irish in town rose about three-fold. Evidence from the St. Martin-in-the-Fields workhouse suggests that more and more of that population was establishing itself permanently in London, as many more Irish families were able to apply for indoor relief than previously.

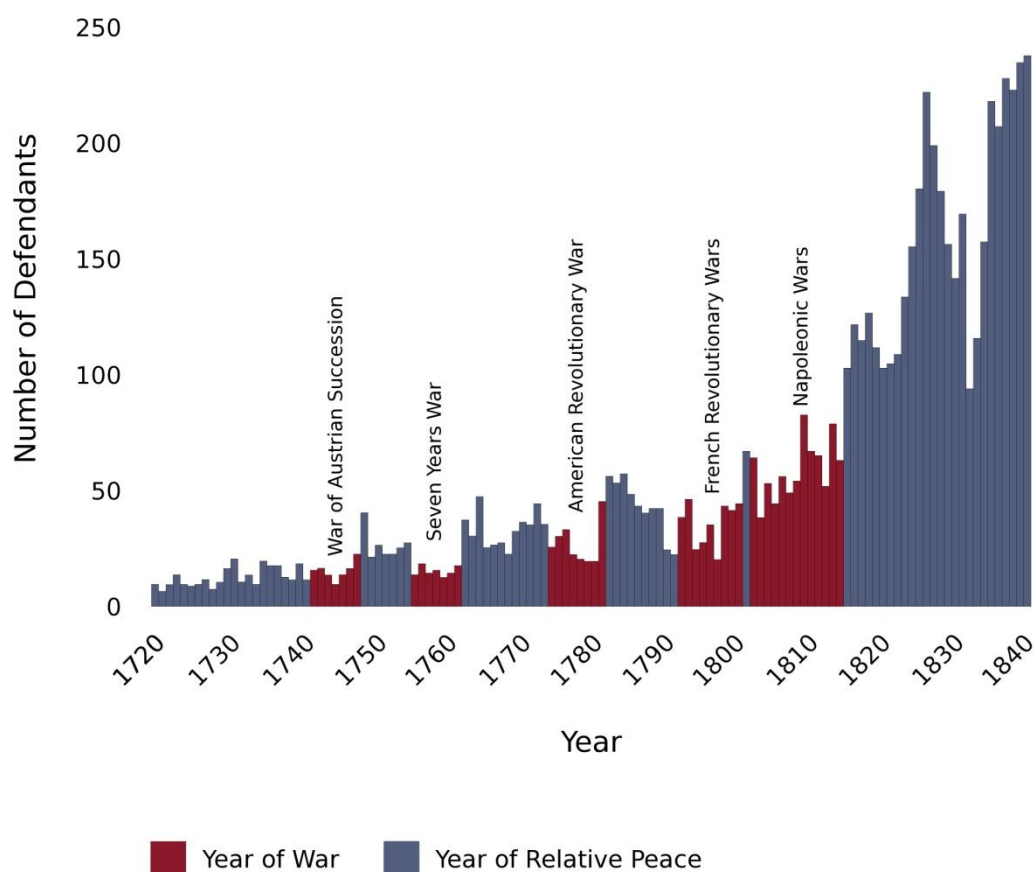
Post-Waterloo London was therefore becoming home to greater numbers of Irish individuals than ever before. However, as is well known of the Irish in London, they tended to live in poverty and were amongst the least able in the city to weather the price crisis of 1816-1817. Whether they committed more crimes or were targeted by the locals who were less sympathetic towards an Irish party in a dispute, we do not know. What is clear is that the population was on the rise, fuelled by demobilisation, cheaper and more efficient travel between Ireland and London, poor economic conditions in Ireland, and a naïve idea that things were better in the metropolis.

The changes described in this chapter between periods of dearth, war, and peace are not, in most cases, minor fluctuations, but deep changes to conflict and conflict resolution patterns in the capital. These glimpses into a series of extraordinary moments also show an evolution of the Irish in London.

Demobilisation created an artificial glut of Irish males in the city. This pattern is not unique to the early nineteenth century, as a longer view of Irish-named defendants in the eighteenth century shows similar patterns after each of the major wars (see Figure 8.11). The English in particular liked to complain that the Irish were stealing their jobs, but it was predominantly English MPs who allowed the Irish into the military in the first place, and it was English-dominated foreign policy, as well as the practices of the fiscal-military state that resulted in so many young Irish men unwittingly finding themselves on the streets of the capital.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> For English complaints of Irish job-stealers, see: Redford, *Labour Migration*, 133.



**Figure 8.11: Defendants with Irish surnames at the Old Bailey per year, 1720-1820.**

Once in London, networks could be built which could facilitate future migration of friends and extended family, and encourage the Irish to stay longer when they were in London. If the English had intended to keep the Irish out of places like London by restricting access to poor relief, the short-sightedness of the government's demobilisation policy and strategy of dumping soldiers and sailors in London or Portsmouth to save money undermined this effort.

Studies of migration often describe the motives of migrants by using the terms 'push' and 'pull' factors. The story that has come to light in this chapter of demobilised soldiers finding themselves dumped in large numbers in the English capital does not conform to either push or pull factors. It was a top-down policy of the government that led to intensive internal migration without the consent of the migrants. This adds a new dimension to our understanding of the Irish who lived in the capital in the early nineteenth century that has hitherto been entirely

invisible to historians. The actors in this movement of people did not have agency in the process. The 1793 Catholic Relief Act and the resultant swelling of the ranks of the military with Irish Catholics led to a new type of migration controlled by the state, focused outwards to hostile threats abroad, and with little regard to how their movement of these people at the end of the war would affect relations between communities, on the streets of Britain.

## Concluding Remarks

The chapters in this thesis broadly fall into two sections. The first section questioned what Irishness was in an early nineteenth-century context and arrived at a rather data-centric solution to identifying the Irish in historical records through the creation of a tool that applies a surname analysis to digitised texts. The second section tested that tool in a series of historical case studies related to the ways in which Londoners settled disputes with the Irish living in their midst, and pinpointed those contexts in which disputes arose. Which factors led to conflict between the Irish and non-Irish in early nineteenth-century London and what did contemporaries do about it? Though the chapters build upon one another, and the sections are inter-woven, given the distinct nature of how they impact on our understanding of digital humanities methods in history, as well as the historical Irish in Britain, it seems best to discuss each section in turn.

Many of the ideas incorporated into this research have been drawn from a number of distinct fields, ranging from Irish history, to crime history, to the history of poverty, to immigration history, to onomastics, to digital humanities, to identity theory. I think of this as integrative rather than interdisciplinary history, an approach which tries to bring in ideas that may not always find themselves at the fore of historical discussions, and apply them to historical questions in ways that may not have yet been tried.

### ***A Data-Centric Approach to Historical Irishness***

This thesis has showed that historical Irishness is not clear-cut. Our twenty-first century ideas about national identity, citizenship, and passport eligibility create a framework that is too simple if we hope to understand the Irish in the early nineteenth century. Ireland's complex national history meant that there were a number of competing identities amongst those who happened to be born in or live in Ireland. Distinct cultural, regional, and religious differences meant that it was not until the 1790s that a 'united Irish' notion began to emerge. Even the

United Irishmen who sought to rally the people of Ireland around a common idea of Irishness remained a contentious group, ultimately dividing the nation with a violent rebellion in 1798.

The complexity of Irishness on the streets of London, where there never was a single coherent Irish community, is easy enough to see. Instead of one Irish community, there were many communities, some larger and more noteworthy than others (such as in St. Giles-in-the-Fields); but these sub-groups of Irish individuals remained distinct from each other until finally, after several generations, their members developed English accents, created English friendship networks, and blended into English society, perhaps even forgetting their Irish roots. No contemporaries ever used 'London Irish' to describe the Irish in London. Instead of thinking of them as the 'London Irish', the Irish networks noted by Craig Bailey in his work on the middle-class Irish in the metropolis form a better framework upon which to understand the Irish poor in London.<sup>1</sup> These Irish individuals did not all arrive for the same reason, nor did they arrive with the hopes of integrating into *the* Irish community. When they did arrive they formed acquaintances based on their networks and lived in places that were appropriate for their level of income and the work in which they sought to engage.

Despite this complexity, some focus solely on Irish birthplace as an acceptable identifier of Irishness. If you want to claim someone was Irish, find a primary source that says they were born in Ireland. Otherwise, assume they were not. This was the approach Peter King took in his study of Irishness and criminal justice in the long eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> King's study produced useful results, but in an era of big data analysis and demographic sampling, it is methodologically conservative, replicating the techniques of a generation of social scientists such as Lynn Hollen Lees who published their work more than three decades ago.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bailey, *Irish London*.

<sup>2</sup> King, 'Ethnicity, Prejudice and Justice', 390-414.

<sup>3</sup> Lees, *The Exiles of Erin*.

King based a study of 1750 to 1825 (75 years) on a series of cases that occurred only between 1791 and 1805 (15 years). Such were the limits of his sources – or so he felt. King operated with the limits of simple nominal record linkage, believing that to be the only academically rigorous approach. Consequently, he ignored the thousands of court cases for which no record-linking was available. Studies such as his could now be re-analysed by incorporating surname analysis as a means for identifying additional Irish defendants, or for identifying Irish defendants in years for which no corroborating records exist.

King, among others, has perhaps unknowingly operated within an environment crafted by the 1841 census. His specific study did not use the census; instead, it used the *Middlesex Criminal Registers*. Nevertheless, the practice of counting and comparing the Irish was only considered by historians because for the first time ever, the tables of the 1841 census contained a column that outlined the birthplace of every individual in England and Wales on a night in June 1841. It is because of that document, and an extraordinary level of nominal record linkage by demographic and economic historians, that the record-linking tradition found its roots amongst academic historians. It has become so accepted that for decades few have even bothered to suggest there was an acceptable alternative means of identifying Irish individuals. The accessibility of the census and the well-entrenched methodology it allows largely explains why there are so many works on the Irish in Victorian-era Britain. For scholars, it was possible to count the census entries labeled 'Ireland' and draw conclusions. That work has been extremely valuable for my own research. However, it is time we move forward methodologically and explore backward in time and start to ask how we can do demographic research on groups such as the Irish on periods that occurred decades or even centuries before the census. Just because the long eighteenth century lacks a census does not mean we need to continue to ignore groups such as the Irish in that time period. Birthplace is an important (but complex) indicator of Irishness; this thesis has showed that we can move beyond it and still operate with academic confidence.



## ***Conflict and the Irish in London***

Street politics have tended to take a back seat to high politics in the historiography of early nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish relations. On the streets of the metropolis, tens of thousands of Irish individuals interacted with hundreds of thousands of other Londoners over these two decades. Yet, the Irish of early nineteenth-century London do not tend to factor prominently in Irish historiography. For one thing, they fall before the 1841 census, as I mentioned above, making them difficult to analyse using a social scientific approach. That is not, however, the only reason they fail to make headlines. Much of Irish history has unsurprisingly been written by Irish writers. Much of that follows an Irish nationalist tradition. That nationalist narrative has no place for a generation of Irish men and women who lived relatively peacefully under a union with Britain. For a select minority of those writers, the Union represents a moment of betrayal by Irish politicians in a long struggle for freedom from the British yoke. That in itself has drawn Irish nationalist historiography towards aspects of the past that push a nationalist agenda: the 1798 rebellion, Daniel O’Connell’s fight for Catholic rights in the 1820s, and the famine literature of the mid-nineteenth century. Apart from Emmet’s Rebellion in 1803,<sup>4</sup> the Anglo-Irish relationship was relatively calm in the early nineteenth century, at least on a national level, and thus has not drawn the attention of Irish nationalist historians.

One of the goals of this project was to build an understanding of the Irish in London using a social scientific approach in an era that preceded the readily available sources such as the census, which would have made this project so much easier. It draws the Victorian era work on the Irish in London back to the late Georgian era, connecting these historiographies, and providing the opportunity for others to see whether the connections are steadfast, or if revisionism is in order. My initial answer to that question is that yes, revisionism is needed, if only because so many conclusions about the Irish in Britain are coloured so heavily by the needs of a desperate generation of individuals fleeing

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<sup>4</sup> Marianne Elliott, *Robert Emmet: The Making of a Legend* (London, 2003).

the famine of the 1840s. That group was understandably needy, came in huge waves, and significantly altered the demographic makeup of British society. It would be a mistake to paint the Georgian-era Irish with the same brush as these famine refugees.

Londoners of the early decades of the nineteenth century had a very different experience with the Irish. Irish migrants did appear regularly, and in reasonably large numbers, but not nearly in the waves that came during the famine. We have no exact count of the Irish population in the early nineteenth-century metropolis, as we do for later decades. In a city with slightly more than a million people, we can estimate the group at several thousand – probably somewhere in the range of 20,000-50,000 would be reasonable – depending on the year, time of year, and of course who you count.

That means there was a significant group of Irish individuals that local Londoners had to navigate on a daily basis. An examination of the evidence of those interactions suggests conflict between the groups was regular, and was more likely to escalate when something did go wrong than if the combatants were both locals who were known to each other. This thesis has shown that a lack of trust seemed to be at the root of that phenomenon. An Irish person committing a crime or getting into an altercation was more likely to be noticed and confronted. That is not to suggest conflicts did not occur every day between native Londoners. Of course they did. Neither is it to suggest the Irish were not committing disproportionate amounts of crime. They probably were, given their poor economic standing. What is different with the Irish are the resolution strategies put into place with respect to serious conflicts. What this project has been able to measure for the first time is the extent to which the Irish seem to have been singled out for a particular type of conflict resolution strategy: criminal prosecution. This different treatment is perhaps not surprising since the Irish were outsiders, they competed for jobs with local labourers, and they had different cultural characteristics. Those factors surely contributed to escalations when tempers flared.

Usually historians are forced to study only those cases that reach trial. Those cases are a subset of a much larger number of disputes of which the victim seriously considered seeking legal redress. What we rarely see are the cases that did not reach trial, either because they lacked evidence, or the prosecutor changed his or her mind. These abandoned prosecutions, combined with those that went to trial, provide a much more complete picture of the events that led people to seek justice than do trial accounts alone. Luckily the unique records of the Bank of England shed new light on this area, showing that though prosecutions were rare in the early years of the restriction period, Irish defendants were disproportionately likely to find themselves singled out for prosecution for committing a crime against the currency compared to non-Irish individuals. That singling out usually came at the hands of a shopkeeper who was offered a false coin or bank note. It was up to that shopkeeper to decide if the crime was reported. A change in prosecution strategy and a reward system initiated by the bank incentivised shopkeepers and thief takers to raise the alarm much more frequently, catching those who were guilty, rather than only those who were guilty and Irish. This ultimately shifted the burden of initiating prosecutions away from victims and towards a hardened group of professionals, which leveled the playing field, resulting in a greater number of English culprits going to the prisoner's box, and improving the fairness of the justice system (from an Irish perspective), even if it did not result in a decline in Irish prosecutions.

Before this shift towards professionalisation occurred, the evidence presented in this thesis shows that the locals had a short fuse with Irish culprits, and may have been more inclined to give an Englishman the benefit of the doubt, perhaps believing him to have a greater stake in the community than the Irish stranger, and therefore more worthy of mercy. This shows that the Irish were not being welcomed into their new home, especially when something went wrong. This discovery, as it relates to the professionalisation of those tasked with finding and prosecuting suspects opens up questions about whether or not a similar trend appears in the aftermath of the 1829 *Metropolitan Police Act*. A cursory glance at the number of prosecutions in the Old Bailey in 1829 shows an obvious change

in the number and types of prosecutions immediately following the entrance of the new police force, although its effects on the Irish in the capital have been thus far unstudied, leaving open the opportunity for a future research project.

Why the Irish were targeted by locals for prosecution, as opposed to quieter community resolutions (apologies, etc.), is a complex question. The root of the issue comes down to the relationship the Irish had with London and with Britain. It was first and foremost an economic relationship. The Irish were drawn to the area by work on farms, in shipyards, in the military, and countless other jobs. Many were young men, who had no intention of settling permanently in the capital. Instead, they made seasonal trips to and from Britain, often only passing through London on the way to the farms in the southeast that offered temporary cash employment. By January, the size of the Irish population in the capital had withered, as seen by declines in workhouse populations and criminal prosecutions featuring Irish individuals. A large proportion of the Irish had a distinctly seasonal relationship with London, taking advantage of economic opportunities in the capital and surrounding counties, and then returning to Ireland to wait out the winter. Barbara Kerr detailed the importance of Irish seasonal labour in nineteenth-century Britain seven decades ago, but no one has looked at its peripheral impact on rates of crime at different times in the calendar until now.

The army and navy also introduced a different type of temporary, and in many cases unwilling, Irish immigrant. The Irish took advantage of the economic opportunities that came available to them. Thousands of Irish Catholic men in particular joined the British army and navy from 1793. They experienced life abroad fighting the French and the Americans and when the wars were over these men were sent on their way with little or no support. The government's failure to deploy a socially responsible demobilisation strategy during the 1790s and early decades of the 1800s meant that thousands of Irish men in particular were dumped in the capital, rather than being drawn too it. This challenges traditional notions of 'push' and 'pull' factors to explain what motivates individuals to move away from their homeland. The jargon of migration studies

has yet to include a 'dumped' factor. These demobilised servicemen were drawn out of Ireland by the promise of a good job in the army or navy. But they did not give their consent to a life of poverty on the streets of London. This was particularly evidence after the 1802 Peace of Amiens. A close reading of the trial accounts in the post-Napoleonic period does not confirm a similar connection between Irish demobilisation and crime; however some of the proxy evidence available suggests that may be a result of limits in the content of the trial accounts. We will have to leave that under the 'inconclusive' category, particularly given the nature of this thesis's aim to test surname analysis as a valid historical mode of enquiry.

As was noted by contemporaries, the government caused much of the suffering that it condemned. Predictably, reports of crime increased when these soldiers and sailors made landfall in the metropolis. Yet, it was not their Irishness, but their presence under economically strained conditions that led to conflict; seasonal workers from elsewhere in Britain had similar impacts on crime reporting, as did non-Irish servicemen finding themselves demobilised in the capital. Being a stranger was much the same as being an Irish stranger as far as the locals were concerned. Much of this conflict likely could have been avoided by a shift in government policy that would have led these men home to Ireland rather than into the rookeries where hungry mouths and idle hands made for inevitable trouble. If it had not been for British government policy, both the temporary and permanent Irish populations in the metropolis may have been considerably smaller.

### ***Distant Reading vs. Close Reading in Historical Research***

What has been gained and lost by taking a distant reading approach to these historical questions? There are many aspects of the Irish in London that I have been unable to incorporate into this project, however these are for reasons of time and space, rather than limitations on any methodologies used. A fuller treatment might include research into the Irish and misdemeanours – the lesser examples of conflict, as a complement to the work on felonies. Irish women and

Irish youths also deserve treatment, as does Irish-on-Irish conflict in the capital. What is gained by distant reading and this surname analysis tool is a new way of looking at sources that reveals invisible patterns. In some cases, these patterns in the trial records appear to be good proxy evidence for changes occurring in society more broadly. For historians, they can act as a barometer; but they cannot explain those fluctuations on their own. For that, one must look closer at the trials, as well as conduct wider reading. For example, the impermanence of the Irish is difficult to see through a close reading, but this thesis has made these trends much clearer by focusing on the Irish as a population rather than as individuals who made unique choices. By taking this distant reading approach, it became less necessary to find a letter outlining one person's response to an Irish person, and instead became possible to see how they acted collectively – unconsciously. The methodology developed in this thesis has also opened up a number of new opportunities for future research. Surname analysis, if used responsibly and within its limits, can facilitate understanding of a number of research questions about how the Irish experienced life differently from, or indeed in the same way as others. It is particularly useful in studies in which sampling is appropriate and where a few individual errors across a large number of entries will not impact the relevance of the results. Upon reflection, it would have been better to employ this methodology on a longer timeframe, to incorporate many thousands more Irish individuals than were investigated in the current study. For example, a look at the Irish in London from 1688 to 1841 (the Glorious Revolution to the first useable census), would have opened up many more opportunities for appropriate questions and a *longue durée* approach. Beyond crime records, surname analysis would make it possible to monitor the rate at which Irish merchants set up shop in London across many decades, by pairing Irish surnames with entries in the *London Post Office* directory, which listed businesses by the surname of the owner, and which was updated and published on an annual basis. It would be possible to adopt a similar approach to passenger lists to the New World, identifying when and in which proportions Irish families emigrated to Canada, the United States, or Australia, in a range of temporal periods. For those interested in convicts transported to Australia, this methodology makes it possible to ask what proportion of Irish

defendants who were condemned to the trip actually had their sentences carried out, which could be compared to the non-Irish or the Scots, or Welsh. Similarly, it could shed insight into the rate with which Irish and non-Irish people wed and formed families in England by examining marriage and birth records. It could help monitor the intake over time of Irish orphans by the Foundling Hospital in London. It could identify members of staff in any organization, ranging from shipyards, to rail yards, to the army or navy. As long as you have an appropriate list of names of the appropriate era (before the late nineteenth century), you have a means of asking how the Irish compared to the rest. This is a powerful new tool for historians of Britain and Ireland, and one that I look forward to using and watching others use moving forward.

There is also tremendous scope for extending the principles of surname analysis beyond the Irish. Recent work by James Cheshire and Paul Longley has showed that even English surnames can be geospatially mapped, meaning we can tell with a similar level of certainty where someone named 'Howard' or 'Hambleton' likely had their paternal ancestral roots, even down to county-level accuracy.<sup>5</sup> This geospatial analysis, combined with a textual analysis like those conducted in this thesis, would make it possible to map the inter-generational migration of British internal migrants towards major centres such as London, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, and Birmingham. Internal flows are notoriously difficult to map, as distinguishing between subsets of English people from different parts of the country is often not possible using nominal record linkage because many of the records do not contain enough information to infer someone's point of origin. Some historians have tried and made great success on a small scale, such as David Souden and Peter Clark;<sup>6</sup> however, the opportunity is now available to conduct studies of internal migration on a large scale, looking at hundreds of thousands or millions of records stretching across hundreds of years to see how the people of Britain combined and recombined in different ways over time.

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<sup>5</sup> James A. Cheshire and Paul A. Longley, 'Identifying spatial concentrations of surnames' *International Journal of Geographical Information Science*, 26 (2011), 309-325.

<sup>6</sup> See David Souden, "'Rogues, whores and vagabonds'? Indentured servant emigration to North America and the case of mid seventeenth-century Bristol" in Peter Clark and David Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (Totowa, NJ, 1987); Clark, 'Migration in England', 57-90.

These research questions are possible because of a quantitative analysis of the 1841 census, the *Middlesex Criminal Registers*, and the *Middlesex Vagrancy Removal* records. Not everyone likes quantitative analyses, either because they lack mathematical aptitude, or because they believe not everything can be measured – how do you measure the impact of an idea, for instance? Despite those concerns, some of which are valid, quantitative history is not the only way to understand the past, nor does it try to be. Neither is it going to replace the need for qualitative humanistic inquiry. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive. The quantitative analysis of the records in this study has created a tool that makes qualitative judgments about the Irishness of individuals. That blurring between the quantitative/qualitative dichotomy is bound to grow as researchers become more adventurous and new technologies are developed. Quantitative research can complement, reinforce, or challenge qualitative findings, and vice versa. The idea that ‘digital’ or quantitative methods are here to remove the need for pure humanistic methods is a fallacy.

Neither is this work one purely of distant reading. It involved close reading thousands of trial accounts as well as other historical records. It involved integrating examples, where appropriate, to illustrate the conclusions made. It involved following unfruitful paths of enquiry, just as all historians endure in the course of their research. Distant reading is not nearly so different as some historians would like to believe. It does however, lend itself to particular types of research. Because the goal of this thesis was to understand how a quantitative and distant reading approach changed what we could know about the past, the resultant work is at times impersonal, treating the Irish as a swarm of data within a wider dataset, rather than offering agency to the individuals who lived and died in the environment under study. This approach will never be able to unpick the personal narratives that other historians such as Craig Bailey produce so well; but it seeks to do something different. It seeks to stand back and look at movements of people over many years and in many ways, to see what those movements look like from afar. To see what patterns emerge. To see what forces brought us together over the centuries to create the London we see today.



This of course requires a new set of skills that are as yet rarely taught in history departments. Scholars require extensive data cleaning and data manipulation skills to ensure the data is in a format that the computer can work with effectively. Computer programming, statistics, and visualisation will need to be added to the historian's toolkit alongside traditional skills such as paleography and critical reasoning. For scholars who chose the path of a humanist so that they could avoid mathematics, they will not likely find a friend in distant reading. New skills are not, however, threats to scholarship. They are instead opportunities to pull together that which has been developed by other disciplines in pursuit of our understanding of the past.

Principles of good scholarship apply to both distant and close reading. The most likely changes are to the types of conversations distant reading studies will direct the historiography towards. Distant reading of texts requires machine-readable text. At the moment, that means that all handwritten manuscripts such as the *Chelsea Hospital Examinations* must be dealt with manually. Anything that has not been digitised is ill suited for this type of study because computers cannot yet analyse paper records. Therefore, scholars interested in this type of project will have to either create a digital corpus, or use one that has already been created. As only a tiny proportion of historical material has been digitised, this type of work will increasingly focus on that small subset of evidence, ignoring the great mass of historical material in the physical archives. We already see this process underway, as the *OBPO* has been keeping track of the growing number of projects that cite it, and presumably that choose their projects specifically so that they can work with remote, well-formatted materials.<sup>7</sup> This is not of course the apocalypse. Technological changes may make those concerns moot; we will just have to wait and see what the future of digitisation holds. In the meantime, we must be aware of what is not being studied as a result of these great digital corpora, and recognise that landscape still leaves itself ripe for close reading and traditional scholarship to move in where distant reading proves lacking.

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<sup>7</sup> Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, "Old Bailey Online - Publications that Cite the Old Bailey Proceedings Online", *OBPO*.



I would like to finish by highlighting what I believe has been the greatest contribution of this thesis. Most of this work was only possible because of a number of previous digitisation projects that converted the materials used in this thesis into a machine-readable format. These included the *Old Bailey Online*, the *London Lives* project, initiatives between the National Archives and Ancestry.com, as well as projects by scholars such as Liam Brunt, Edmund Cannon, Peter Solar, Jan Tore Klovland, Jeremy Boulton, and Leonard Schwartz. Their efforts have meant it was possible to work directly with tens of thousands of records in a way that has only recently been possible.

This thesis is one of the first to directly benefit from an explosion of machine-readable source material, but also from a cultural shift towards open access and sharing of research materials. Sharing data rather than just sharing of research findings in the form of books or articles has made it possible to combine the labour of many people for the first time. Instead of building on Jeremy Boulton's historical findings published in a journal, I built on his spreadsheet, which I combined with others, in ways that neither their original creators, nor perhaps Boulton himself imagined I would. It never occurred to scholars working in the 1970s, such as Lynn Hollen Lees, that anyone might want access to her punch cards (her dataset). Instead the culture at the time was one in which historians were expected to produce manuscripts; the dataset was a byproduct of that process. This culture is changing, albeit slowly. The output of a PhD is still a written text that can fit nicely on the shelves of the library. Theses in the humanities cannot yet be practical (such as a web-based tool other scholars can use directly), though in the sciences they are increasingly so. It is now common for science and engineering laboratories to be left in possession of the physical and computational outputs of a student in the form of new equipment, code, or collected data, and to then be able to build iteratively on those outputs towards new findings. In the humanities that is not yet the case; students take with them whatever they have produced (often because they have not been paid to produce it), and the work only continues if the student stays in academia.

Nevertheless, at the time of writing, change is beginning to appear, and I hope my work has been and will continue to be an advocate for that change. As a society we have built these scholarly datasets at a cost of millions of pounds, with whole careers devoted to their creation. Now that we have them, it is time we see how these datasets allow us to see the past differently. I believe I have made small inroads into demonstrating how one dataset in particular: the *Old Bailey Online* has made it possible to understand Irish immigration and integration in London in ways that are entirely impractical, if not impossible, with the original written sources. We have all heard the cliché that scholars build upon the shoulders of giants. These recent technological and cultural changes mean that we are about to see the pace of scholarship explode, and I am looking forward to being a part of it.

## Appendices

### *Appendix 1: Irish Root Surnames (The Tool)*

**283 Root surnames that have been shown to be reliable for identifying probable Irish individuals in eighteenth-century London.**

The selected surnames were defined as names with an Irishness score of at least 50 and appearing in the 1841 census sample at least four times. They are shown in alphabetical order, with punctuation removed and all names in lower case. If you use this appendix in your research, please cite this thesis. For a full list of names including homonyms and derivatives, contact the author directly:

ahern, alton, anglin, ashe, baggot, barry, bermingham, bernick, boran, boyan, breen, brenan, brian, broderick, broman, brosman, bryden, bucke, buckly, bulger, burke, byrne, cabe, caffrey, cahill, calden, callaghan, calnon, canty, carby, carmody, carney, carrigan, carroll, casey, cassidy, cathey, caulfield, cavanagh, caveney, clancy, cleary, cline, cochran, cocklin, coffee, cokely, conard, condon, connell, connor, conroy, cooney, corey, corley, costello, cotter, coulter, coyle, crawley, creagh, crone, cronin, curley, curran, cusack, cushen, daby, dacey, daly, darcy, darey, darley, daun, delany, desmond, dillon, dimsey, divine, doherty, dolan, dolphin, doming, donelly, donerson, donoghue, donovan, doody, doran, dowd, dowman, downey, doyle, driscoll, duby, duffy, duggan, duggins, dundon, dunne, dunworth, durkin, dwyer, early, egan, enright, fagan, farrell, feeny, finn, finnigan, fitton, fitzgerald, fitzgibbon, fitzmaurice, flaherty, flanagan, fling, flynn, foley, gafney, galey, gallagher, gannon, garry, garvey, gathers, gaugh, gavesk,

gavin, gilligan, glynn, gogin, gorman, grady, grogan, gulliford, guman, hackley,  
hagerty, hallahan, halman, hanigan, harnett, harrigan, harrinton, haye,  
hefferman, helton, helvy, hely, hennesy, hickey, hogan, holey, hollan, hollifield,  
horan, hormel, hormley, hosty, hurley, hynes, jaffe, joice, kean, kearney, keefe,  
keegan, keenan, kellard, keller, kelly, kenedy, kennelly, kenny, keogh, kilsey, lally,  
lamp, lawler, Leahy, leary, lewman, linehan, lorry, loves, lovet, lowney, lynch,  
lynott, maabie, macguire, madden, magee, magner, maher, mahoney, maker,  
maloney, mara, mardock, marney, mcauliff, mccabe, mccauffrey, mccarthy,  
mccathy, mccormack, mccoey, mcdermott, mcdonnell, mcdonough, mcgrath,  
mchugh, mcivor, mcjames, mckenna, mckensie, mcloughlin, mcmahon, mcmanus,  
mcnamara, mcquin, megan, mellett, molley, mooney, moran, moriarty, morrice,  
moylan, mulcahy, mulligan, mullin, murphy, myan, myler, neagle, neil, nowlan,  
nowland, ohara, ormsby, pursell, quill, quin, quinlan, rainy, readen, rearden,  
reddy, regan, reily, roach, ronan, roney, rourke, ryan, sayce, scanlan, scannell,  
scully, seary, shannon, shaughnessy, shea, sheen, sheridan, spelling, sulison,  
sullivan, sweeney, taff, tierney, tobin, tool, toomey, tracy, troy, walsh, warling,  
whelan

## ***Appendix 2: Defendants by Crime Type 1801, 1803***

Defendants per month by crime type, comparing January-August 1801 (high prices, war) with June-December 1803 (low prices, war).

Crime Type	Average defendants in January-August 1801	Excess over June-December 1803	Average increase in defendants per month (%)
Animal Theft	4.63	1.48	47.2
Burglary	6.63	2.77	71.8
Pocket Picking	1.75	0.75	75.0
Shoplifting	2.38	0.95	66.3
Receiving Stolen Goods	4.25	1.82	75.0
Grand Larceny	46.25	15.25	49.2

### ***Appendix 3: 'Irish' Defendants in OBPO***

The 1,715 names (in lower case) and XML reference IDs for all defendants in the OBPO that were classified as 'Irish' for the purposes of this thesis, ordered by date of trial. The OBPO Defendant ID Number is the XML tag used by the OBPO to identify the individual. The criteria for Irishness can be 'Birthplace', 'Keyword', 'Surname', or 'Multiple', as defined in Chapter 4.

<b>OBPO Defendant ID Number</b>	<b>Defendant's Full Name</b>	<b>Criteria for Irishness</b>
t18010114-22-defend241	james riley	Multiple
t18010114-28-defend311	elizabeth keef	Multiple
t18010114-28-defend313	james kelly	Multiple
t18010114-36-defend373	andrew branning	Birthplace
t18010114-37-defend383	joseph malone	Surname
t18010114-45-defend454	john kelly	Surname
t18010114-51-defend531	thomas coffee	Multiple
t18010218-17-defend111	patrick crawley	Surname
t18010218-18-defend123	james dillon	Multiple
t18010218-2-defend8	michael cassidy	Multiple
t18010218-33-defend223	matthew reardon	Surname
t18010218-58-defend346	john branning	Birthplace
t18010218-80-defend503	catherine shehan	Multiple
t18010218-82-defend543	stephen caton	Birthplace
t18010415-108-defend1102	william colbert	Birthplace
t18010415-11-defend133	bridget murphy	Surname
t18010415-114-defend1147	william roach	Multiple
t18010415-125-defend1221	william swann	Birthplace
t18010415-127-defend1246	susan roberts	Birthplace
t18010415-13-defend148	james hart	Birthplace
t18010415-30-defend295	mary bryant	Birthplace
t18010415-70-defend771	eleanor gibson	Birthplace
t18010415-70-defend773	richard barrett	Birthplace
t18010415-71-defend779	valentine henley	Birthplace
t18010415-82-defend876	jane welch	Surname
t18010415-95-defend1001	john connor	Multiple
t18010415-96-defend1006	richard green	Birthplace
t18010415-99-defend1026	thomas mccann	Birthplace
t18010520-27-defend227	john russell	Birthplace
t18010520-3-defend50	dennis kennedy	Multiple
t18010520-3-defend52	william mccormack	Surname
t18010520-31-defend260	mary keen	Birthplace
t18010520-31-defend262	catherine clarke	Birthplace
t18010520-38-defend300	william burk	Surname
t18010520-42-defend327	john sullivan	Surname
t18010520-49-defend373	joseph holmes	Birthplace
t18010520-87-defend646	john collins	Birthplace
t18010520-94-defend696	john welch	Surname
t18010701-10-defend115	michael oneal	Multiple
t18010701-11-defend120	nathaniel lewis	Birthplace
t18010701-19-defend198	william burk	Multiple
t18010701-25-defend248	john connor	Multiple
t18010701-37-defend393	isaac wise	Birthplace
t18010701-39-defend407	andrew kerbey	Birthplace
t18010701-40-defend409	andrew kerbey	Birthplace

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t18010701-41-defend414	john mahany	Multiple
t18010701-5-defend66	mary haycock	Birthplace
t18010701-61-defend515	juliet doveran	Birthplace
t18010701-70-defend572	john read	Birthplace
t18010916-102-defend681	owen foy	Birthplace
t18010916-114-defend737	catherine williams	Birthplace
t18010916-115-defend740	eleanor goff	Birthplace
t18010916-119-defend763	cornelius allen	Birthplace
t18010916-16-defend132	nicholas white	Birthplace
t18010916-18-defend140	cornelius kennard	Birthplace
t18010916-20-defend151	thomas dennis	Birthplace
t18010916-39-defend262	richard butler	Birthplace
t18010916-39-defend264	john briant	Birthplace
t18010916-58-defend424	john nowland	Multiple
t18010916-6-defend76	ann gill	Birthplace
t18010916-64-defend499	michael ryan	Multiple
t18010916-65-defend503	mary shee	Surname
t18010916-85-defend596	bryan carroll	Multiple
t18010916-93-defend647	mary davis	Birthplace
t18011028-24-defend269	dennis murphy	Surname
t18011028-30-defend303	john kennedy	Surname
t18011028-39-defend380	james legg	Birthplace
t18011028-46-defend433	john connor	Surname
t18011028-6-defend84	michael waylan	Birthplace
t18011028-67-defend578	michael darcey	Keyword
t18011028-67-defend580	dennis hurley	Multiple
t18011028-68-defend592	elizabeth murphy	Surname
t18011028-73-defend638	catherine brannon	Multiple
t18011028-75-defend648	eleanor ryan	Multiple
t18011202-15-defend185	james cannon	Multiple
t18011202-26-defend267	catharine murphy	Surname
t18011202-35-defend340	daniel crawley	Multiple
t18011202-37-defend358	john scully	Surname
t18011202-39-defend368	mark conner	Multiple
t18011202-40-defend382	thomas blake	Birthplace
t18011202-40-defend383	robert walsh	Surname
t18011202-41-defend397	james barry	Surname
t18011202-48-defend433	peter cochran	Surname
t18011202-7-defend123	michael gavin	Surname
t18020113-17-defend208	bridget reading	Birthplace
t18020113-26-defend342	michael doyle	Surname
t18020113-27-defend351	jeremiah nealy	Birthplace
t18020113-38-defend432	daniel crawley	Multiple
t18020113-48-defend512	nelly macdonald	Birthplace
t18020113-64-defend657	stephen byrne	Multiple
t18020113-67-defend692	sarah murphy	Surname
t18020113-8-defend105	patrick merriman	Birthplace
t18020113-82-defend809	patrick duff	Birthplace
t18020113-84-defend819	william bryan	Surname
t18020217-10-defend127	william thompson	Birthplace
t18020217-11-defend140	owen rooke	Birthplace
t18020217-16-defend189	michael dumfey	Birthplace
t18020217-21-defend258	walter duggan	Surname
t18020217-21-defend260	james condon	Multiple
t18020217-22-defend276	james byrne	Surname
t18020217-29-defend333	thomas daly	Surname
t18020217-31-defend359	margaret kennedy	Multiple
t18020217-5-defend80	daniel mcalenan	Birthplace
t18020217-51-defend614	james mackenough	Birthplace



t18020217-54-defend667	john murphy	Multiple
t18020217-61-defend718	daniel mcalenan	Birthplace
t18020217-74-defend781	peter dealy	Surname
t18020217-82-defend825	thomas fitzgerald	Surname
t18020217-83-defend837	john fitzgerald	Surname
t18020428-120-defend877	owen judge	Birthplace
t18020428-124-defend895	ann duff	Birthplace
t18020428-127-defend907	edward walsh	Multiple
t18020428-13-defend103	daniel mccarty	Multiple
t18020428-131-defend926	archibald riddell	Birthplace
t18020428-134-defend934	john carson	Birthplace
t18020428-137-defend949	catherine burn	Birthplace
t18020428-152-defend1039	simon doyle	Surname
t18020428-25-defend223	william murphy	Surname
t18020428-29-defend243	james ryley	Surname
t18020428-34-defend265	william farrell	Surname
t18020428-44-defend315	julia clarke	Birthplace
t18020428-49-defend346	james townsend	Birthplace
t18020428-50-defend385	john fennell	Birthplace
t18020428-6-defend74	james jones	Birthplace
t18020428-63-defend520	philip green	Birthplace
t18020428-70-defend559	mary grosvenor	Birthplace
t18020428-74-defend576	edmund nowlan	Multiple
t18020428-77-defend595	michael dumfey	Birthplace
t18020428-82-defend618	thomas kernan	Birthplace
t18020428-82-defend620	patrick rowan	Birthplace
t18020428-94-defend701	esther wellington	Birthplace
t18020602-20-defend176	peter carrons	Birthplace
t18020602-23-defend200	catherine mulby	Birthplace
t18020602-25-defend216	william donnellan	Birthplace
t18020602-30-defend254	james shean	Multiple
t18020602-37-defend299	william patten	Birthplace
t18020602-40-defend320	timothy callaghan	Surname
t18020602-56-defend448	morris scully	Multiple
t18020602-61-defend480	john thornton	Birthplace
t18020602-66-defend514	thomas obrien	Multiple
t18020714-16-defend192	jeremiah daley	Surname
t18020714-21-defend279	james kennedy	Surname
t18020714-46-defend488	james burk	Surname
t18020714-60-defend624	jane dunn	Birthplace
t18020714-64-defend646	sarah walsh	Surname
t18020714-66-defend659	john conder	Birthplace
t18020714-77-defend736	william mackever	Birthplace
t18020714-90-defend803	john hawkins	Birthplace
t18020918-12-defend156	mary mullins	Birthplace
t18020918-134-defend898	joanna mccarthy	Surname
t18020918-16-defend184	james mcguire	Birthplace
t18020918-160-defend1065	francis waldon	Multiple
t18020918-18-defend196	james sheen	Multiple
t18020918-25-defend237	mary callahan	Multiple
t18020918-38-defend317	edward foley	Multiple
t18020918-39-defend325	ann brett	Birthplace
t18020918-45-defend365	mary heath	Birthplace
t18020918-5-defend94	john murphy	Multiple
t18020918-58-defend455	alice bennett	Birthplace
t18020918-63-defend485	james mccormick	Multiple
t18020918-66-defend502	dennis burk	Multiple
t18020918-67-defend509	william toppe	Birthplace
t18020918-68-defend514	joanna braidy	Birthplace

t18020918-7-defend113	thomas brannam	Birthplace
t18020918-70-defend528	francis riley	Surname
t18020918-71-defend544	george steward	Birthplace
t18020918-74-defend560	john murphy	Surname
t18020918-77-defend580	edward odannel	Birthplace
t18020918-79-defend602	elizabeth ryan	Surname
t18020918-82-defend621	john connor	Multiple
t18021027-100-defend875	eleanor casson	Birthplace
t18021027-101-defend878	morris haley	Multiple
t18021027-101-defend880	judith quinland	Multiple
t18021027-101-defend882	james brown	Multiple
t18021027-105-defend962	james barron	Birthplace
t18021027-106-defend973	thomas connall	Multiple
t18021027-109-defend997	john connor	Surname
t18021027-115-defend1042	catharine sullivan	Multiple
t18021027-127-defend1120	maurice connor	Multiple
t18021027-127-defend1122	john kelly	Multiple
t18021027-128-defend1136	john molloy	Multiple
t18021027-129-defend1144	mary rock	Birthplace
t18021027-132-defend1167	william murphy	Surname
t18021027-133-defend1175	john howard	Birthplace
t18021027-142-defend1244	eleanor davis	Birthplace
t18021027-4-defend78	thomas stewart	Birthplace
t18021027-44-defend412	john kennedy	Surname
t18021027-5-defend83	thomas daley	Surname
t18021027-50-defend466	michael lahey	Multiple
t18021027-56-defend518	mary kelley	Surname
t18021027-59-defend533	john browne	Birthplace
t18021027-60-defend538	edward coates	Birthplace
t18021027-61-defend543	edward coates	Birthplace
t18021027-62-defend550	james white	Birthplace
t18021027-66-defend598	michael welch	Multiple
t18021027-66-defend600	john mcleod	Birthplace
t18021027-7-defend97	henry welch	Surname
t18021027-82-defend736	simon fuller	Birthplace
t18021027-89-defend792	james sheen	Multiple
t18021027-90-defend796	charles oconnor	Surname
t18021027-91-defend804	michael conolly	Surname
t18021027-98-defend859	kenneth mackenzie	Birthplace
t18021201-11-defend127	william kirvin	Birthplace
t18021201-11-defend128	mary connor	Multiple
t18021201-12-defend137	peter freeman	Birthplace
t18021201-18-defend174	maurice doyle	Multiple
t18021201-21-defend195	jeremiah mahoney	Multiple
t18021201-30-defend259	ann flynn	Surname
t18021201-37-defend292	mary grosvenor	Birthplace
t18021201-38-defend296	catherine mead	Birthplace
t18021201-38-defend298	john doran	Multiple
t18021201-41-defend312	eleanor carty	Multiple
t18021201-46-defend347	john doran	Surname
t18021201-58-defend407	bridget blake	Birthplace
t18021201-59-defend415	john patrick nowland	Surname
t18021201-61-defend432	charles burne	Birthplace
t18021201-90-defend642	john kelly	Surname
t18030112-103-defend746	james white	Birthplace
t18030112-105-defend763	patrick connor	Surname
t18030112-109-defend795	jeremiah kelly	Multiple
t18030112-113-defend812	james gorman	Multiple
t18030112-114-defend815	james gorman	Multiple

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t18030112-120-defend850	ann robinson	Birthplace
t18030112-18-defend135	ann robinson	Birthplace
t18030112-34-defend227	james plunket	Birthplace
t18030112-35-defend233	john ryan	Multiple
t18030112-41-defend261	felix oneil	Multiple
t18030112-42-defend266	mary cross	Birthplace
t18030112-48-defend296	richard green	Birthplace
t18030112-54-defend348	john connor	Multiple
t18030112-55-defend363	john connor	Multiple
t18030112-56-defend386	john connor	Multiple
t18030112-62-defend459	john murphy	Surname
t18030112-69-defend500	catharine martin	Birthplace
t18030112-75-defend541	eleanor marney	Surname
t18030216-10-defend73	john nicholas	Birthplace
t18030216-26-defend159	jeremiah raynard	Birthplace
t18030216-3-defend46	james carney	Multiple
t18030216-34-defend206	margaret sullivan	Multiple
t18030216-38-defend229	james nowland	Surname
t18030216-39-defend237	james nowland	Surname
t18030216-45-defend288	john connor	Multiple
t18030216-52-defend369	mary macarty	Multiple
t18030216-55-defend392	rebecca murphy	Surname
t18030216-67-defend458	george harrison	Birthplace
t18030216-70-defend480	owen smith	Birthplace
t18030216-75-defend513	sarah farrel	Surname
t18030216-80-defend548	daniel macarthy	Multiple
t18030420-1-defend44	william piers	Birthplace
t18030420-11-defend145	patrick craig	Birthplace
t18030420-112-defend883	john jones	Birthplace
t18030420-116-defend910	james carney	Surname
t18030420-119-defend930	william owen	Birthplace
t18030420-122-defend952	mary welch	Surname
t18030420-123-defend959	elizabeth branning	Birthplace
t18030420-128-defend985	richard joyce	Birthplace
t18030420-128-defend987	john halfpenny	Birthplace
t18030420-130-defend994	john brown	Birthplace
t18030420-16-defend178	bryan callaghan	Multiple
t18030420-2-defend62	james macnamara	Surname
t18030420-23-defend232	john holt	Birthplace
t18030420-24-defend235	william fitzgerald	Surname
t18030420-66-defend585	john warren	Birthplace
t18030420-67-defend593	peter gregory	Birthplace
t18030420-68-defend601	peter gregory	Birthplace
t18030420-76-defend648	elizabeth ford	Birthplace
t18030420-86-defend716	thomas murky	Birthplace
t18030525-11-defend91	thomas boyle	Birthplace
t18030525-16-defend124	jeremiah collins	Birthplace
t18030525-20-defend169	john bryan	Multiple
t18030525-20-defend171	ann bryan	Surname
t18030525-25-defend225	richard johnson	Birthplace
t18030525-35-defend275	eleanor callagan	Multiple
t18030525-65-defend457	john conner	Surname
t18030525-68-defend480	ann hughes	Birthplace
t18030525-70-defend494	robert lyons	Birthplace
t18030525-71-defend499	daniel murphy	Multiple
t18030525-72-defend508	john green	Birthplace
t18030525-72-defend509	ann morro	Birthplace
t18030525-73-defend516	michael tool	Multiple
t18030706-13-defend78	michael welch	Multiple

t18030706-16-defend86	winifred mclochlan	Birthplace
t18030706-22-defend104	andrew gill	Birthplace
t18030706-27-defend122	james williams	Birthplace
t18030706-30-defend134	ann mccarthy	Multiple
t18030706-35-defend201	alice bennet	Birthplace
t18030706-43-defend239	dominic welch	Multiple
t18030706-61-defend346	terence doyle	Surname
t18030706-69-defend374	john burk	Surname
t18030706-74-defend405	moses murphy	Surname
t18030706-9-defend68	hannah norton	Birthplace
t18030914-112-defend1029	bridget smith	Birthplace
t18030914-15-defend164	eleanor harris	Birthplace
t18030914-16-defend175	john punch	Birthplace
t18030914-28-defend276	humphrey crawley	Multiple
t18030914-31-defend294	john leary	Multiple
t18030914-32-defend307	henry john williams	Birthplace
t18030914-4-defend87	eliza barry	Surname
t18030914-52-person458	mary towney	Birthplace
t18030914-58-defend509	elizabeth doyle	Surname
t18030914-59-defend516	nicholas macnamara	Multiple
t18030914-73-defend610	catharine boyle	Birthplace
t18030914-74-person618	daniel murphy	Multiple
t18030914-80-defend654	john carroll	Surname
t18030914-80-defend656	john daly	Surname
t18030914-88-defend748	catherine bryan	Multiple
t18030914-90-defend760	michael carney	Multiple
t18030914-93-defend800	mary brennard	Birthplace
t18031026-12-defend131	cornelius connell	Surname
t18031026-20-defend198	catherine fitzgerald	Surname
t18031026-25-defend217	george hayes	Birthplace
t18031026-31-defend235	eleanor keefe	Surname
t18031026-45-defend285	john johnson	Birthplace
t18031026-45-defend287	thomas barnes	Multiple
t18031026-47-person299	ann tubby	Birthplace
t18031026-5-defend87	john marshall	Birthplace
t18031026-54-defend356	timothy tool	Multiple
t18031026-56-defend380	john kennedy	Surname
t18031026-57-defend393	john kennedy	Surname
t18031026-60-defend420	mary sullivan	Multiple
t18031026-62-defend447	henry ohara	Multiple
t18031026-75-defend603	joseph bennett	Birthplace
t18031130-21-defend203	joanna bennett	Birthplace
t18031130-23-defend216	hannah welch	Multiple
t18031130-23-defend218	mary bryan	Multiple
t18031130-24-defend224	john driscoll	Surname
t18031130-25-defend234	thomas doran	Surname
t18031130-28-defend258	james taylor	Birthplace
t18031130-33-defend299	margaret aldus	Birthplace
t18031130-35-defend311	george hayes	Birthplace
t18031130-39-defend346	margaret riley	Surname
t18031130-43-defend378	joseph dolphin	Surname
t18031130-45-defend388	daniel fitzmaurice	Surname
t18031130-47-defend402	mary dealy	Surname
t18031130-47-defend404	abigail quinland	Multiple
t18031130-49-defend428	john bryant	Birthplace
t18031130-53-defend472	henry jordan	Birthplace
t18031130-55-defend486	peter mulkern	Birthplace
t18040111-11-defend135	arthur mcginnis	Birthplace
t18040111-16-defend175	robert woodbourne	Birthplace

t18040111-23-defend241	margaret carrol	Multiple
t18040111-24-defend252	thomas barry	Multiple
t18040111-38-defend359	cornelius mahoney	Surname
t18040111-45-defend418	jeremiah corneilly	Birthplace
t18040111-74-defend775	mary matthews	Birthplace
t18040111-82-defend829	elizabeth brian	Multiple
t18040111-9-defend122	robert reardon	Surname
t18040215-23-defend237	daniel barry	Multiple
t18040215-26-defend260	eleanor clifford	Birthplace
t18040215-40-defend370	james oren	Birthplace
t18040215-54-defend467	patrick hughes	Birthplace
t18040215-67-defend566	peter conner	Multiple
t18040215-67-defend568	andrew burn	Birthplace
t18040215-71-defend597	honora sullins	Birthplace
t18040411-11-defend154	richard radley	Birthplace
t18040411-40-defend441	eleanor flaherty	Surname
t18040411-49-defend510	thomas hickey	Multiple
t18040411-57-defend605	john tate	Birthplace
t18040411-60-defend632	john thompson	Birthplace
t18040411-62-defend639	john martin	Keyword
t18040411-75-defend814	bartholomew scully	Surname
t18040411-77-defend829	edward stack	Birthplace
t18040411-82-defend872	mary stack	Multiple
t18040411-9-defend143	richard radley	Birthplace
t18040516-10-defend123	david fitzgerald	Multiple
t18040516-11-defend129	james flood	Birthplace
t18040516-25-defend269	james stapleton	Birthplace
t18040516-33-defend327	ann burke	Surname
t18040516-41-defend407	johanna murphy	Multiple
t18040516-43-defend424	mary kelly	Multiple
t18040516-46-defend448	humphry hobart	Birthplace
t18040516-7-defend104	mary blake	Birthplace
t18040516-8-defend110	patrick cooling	Birthplace
t18040704-19-defend244	hannah callagnan	Birthplace
t18040704-19-defend246	eleanor holland	Birthplace
t18040704-48-defend490	michael foley	Multiple
t18040704-52-defend517	john oshaughnessy	Birthplace
t18040704-60-defend606	nicholas burke	Multiple
t18040704-61-defend614	john welch	Multiple
t18040704-7-defend98	thomas riley	Multiple
t18040704-9-defend109	joseph jackson	Keyword
t18040912-15-defend236	john mccarthy	Multiple
t18040912-2-defend69	jane williams	Birthplace
t18040912-3-defend89	charles connelly	Multiple
t18040912-38-defend476	susannah mccarty	Surname
t18040912-42-defend511	catharine drew	Birthplace
t18040912-42-defend513	catharine carney	Multiple
t18040912-5-defend146	maurice conner	Surname
t18040912-51-defend578	john shaw	Birthplace
t18040912-52-defend601	john conner	Multiple
t18040912-57-defend643	catharine flinn	Surname
t18040912-60-defend668	dennis keefe	Multiple
t18040912-60-defend670	catherine keefe	Multiple
t18040912-62-defend681	ann hickey	Surname
t18040912-65-defend702	mary howel	Birthplace
t18040912-68-defend729	thomas phalial	Birthplace
t18040912-75-defend787	james foley	Multiple
t18040912-9-defend186	thomas slater	Multiple
t18041024-12-defend123	mary lyon	Birthplace

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t18041024-13-defend136	jeremiah collins	Birthplace
t18041024-2-defend55	nicholas brady	Birthplace
t18041024-22-defend219	henry welch	Multiple
t18041024-24-defend238	john troy	Surname
t18041024-33-defend329	john wilkinson	Birthplace
t18041024-4-defend67	mary hartman	Birthplace
t18041024-41-defend405	ann kelly	Multiple
t18041024-51-defend484	mary mahoney	Surname
t18041024-52-defend490	richard green	Birthplace
t18041024-53-defend494	joanna murphy	Multiple
t18041024-59-defend548	timothy higgins	Birthplace
t18041024-59-defend550	bridget higgins	Birthplace
t18041024-63-defend573	thomas green	Birthplace
t18041024-67-defend600	thomas roach	Surname
t18041024-74-defend660	ann adams	Birthplace
t18041205-1-defend48	edward kelly	Multiple
t18041205-36-defend473	henry williams	Birthplace
t18041205-66-defend794	james pierce	Birthplace
t18050109-24-defend298	mary regan	Surname
t18050109-25-defend305	martin ryan	Multiple
t18050109-29-defend334	margaret sullivan	Multiple
t18050109-35-defend382	bartholomew fitzgerald	Multiple
t18050109-40-defend427	margaret sullivan	Multiple
t18050109-45-defend464	francis cleer	Keyword
t18050109-53-defend534	eleanor harlow	Birthplace
t18050220-15-defend191	john connor	Multiple
t18050220-19-defend224	thomas renards	Birthplace
t18050220-28-defend288	mary hamilton	Birthplace
t18050220-29-defend295	matthew doyle	Multiple
t18050220-32-defend339	edward mahon	Surname
t18050220-35-defend383	john mahany	Surname
t18050220-41-defend433	richard geary	Multiple
t18050220-51-defend515	jane wilson	Birthplace
t18050220-53-defend533	ann costello	Multiple
t18050220-53-defend535	mary costello	Surname
t18050220-54-defend539	james castle	Birthplace
t18050220-59-defend570	joseph mahony	Multiple
t18050220-80-defend761	christopher ellis	Birthplace
t18050220-88-defend827	sarah mclaughlin	Birthplace
t18050220-92-defend858	george ohara	Multiple
t18050424-1-defend52	james neagle	Surname
t18050424-111-defend1047	mary marney	Surname
t18050424-111-defend1049	sarah sullivan	Surname
t18050424-120-defend1124	john murphy	Multiple
t18050424-135-defend1245	james knipe	Birthplace
t18050424-138-defend1269	eleanor lee	Birthplace
t18050424-2-defend62	cain mahony	Surname
t18050424-39-defend455	james reynolds	Birthplace
t18050424-44-defend483	mary dugan	Multiple
t18050424-51-defend549	john smith	Birthplace
t18050424-66-defend668	mary driscall	Multiple
t18050424-72-defend720	john mccarthy	Multiple
t18050424-79-defend812	james higgins	Birthplace
t18050424-83-defend842	mary berry	Birthplace
t18050424-92-defend899	sarah smith	Birthplace
t18050529-14-defend145	margaret leonard	Birthplace
t18050529-2-defend60	margaret bucknell	Birthplace
t18050529-32-defend289	robert farr	Birthplace
t18050529-33-defend295	robert farr	Birthplace

t18050529-34-defend302	john troy	Surname
t18050529-4-defend79	james fagan	Multiple
t18050529-42-defend378	thomas conner	Multiple
t18050529-5-defend85	catharine kelley	Multiple
t18050529-53-defend487	patrick martin	Birthplace
t18050529-57-defend518	margaret stanford	Birthplace
t18050529-7-defend99	ann magrath	Multiple
t18050529-70-defend614	david cotterill	Birthplace
t18050710-25-defend296	daniel buckley	Multiple
t18050710-47-defend520	george darcy	Multiple
t18050710-5-defend90	bridget dunn	Multiple
t18050710-5-defend92	margaret dunn	Multiple
t18050710-58-defend597	mary-ann hamilton	Birthplace
t18050710-63-defend635	john carey	Birthplace
t18050710-85-defend806	hannah camel	Birthplace
t18050710-87-defend821	catherine walter	Birthplace
t18050710-89-defend829	murtough riley	Multiple
t18050918-100-defend911	michael drout	Birthplace
t18050918-105-defend959	elizabeth conner	Surname
t18050918-108-defend992	lucy foley	Surname
t18050918-117-defend1065	eleanor roach	Multiple
t18050918-119-defend1084	george darcy	Multiple
t18050918-120-defend1086	george darcy	Multiple
t18050918-126-defend1161	john dillon	Multiple
t18050918-18-defend181	william daniel obrien	Multiple
t18050918-19-defend187	mary carty	Surname
t18050918-19-defend195	sarah welch	Surname
t18050918-32-defend319	catharine ryan	Surname
t18050918-4-defend73	mary temple	Birthplace
t18050918-40-defend416	james keenan	Multiple
t18050918-45-defend456	daniel barry	Multiple
t18050918-46-defend464	dennis dillon	Surname
t18050918-5-defend80	catharine crawley	Multiple
t18050918-65-defend623	isabella stanford	Birthplace
t18050918-68-defend642	margaret sullivan	Multiple
t18050918-81-defend728	sarah duke	Birthplace
t18050918-92-defend838	margaret riley	Multiple
t18050918-98-defend901	charlotte power	Birthplace
t18051030-26-defend371	lawrence martin	Birthplace
t18051030-3-defend65	michael donahugh	Birthplace
t18051030-30-defend408	ann sullivan	Multiple
t18051030-34-defend445	margaret carrol	Multiple
t18051030-41-defend494	charles donovan	Surname
t18051030-42-defend503	charles donavan	Surname
t18051030-46-defend530	john chilton	Birthplace
t18051030-6-defend94	honora dillon	Multiple
t18051204-10-defend136	ann hudson	Birthplace
t18051204-18-defend207	elizabeth dixon	Birthplace
t18051204-57-defend670	william roach	Multiple
t18051204-7-defend113	mary stack	Birthplace
t18051204-8-defend122	ann connolly	Multiple
t18060115-29-defend310	john oconner	Surname
t18060115-41-defend396	sarah madden	Surname
t18060115-5-defend92	daniel carrol	Surname
t18060115-57-defend513	james kennedy	Surname
t18060219-14-defend172	william ryan	Surname
t18060219-5-defend85	mary mcdermott	Surname
t18060219-62-defend640	patrick leary	Surname
t18060416-29-defend295	dennis sullivan	Surname

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t18060416-75-defend825	donnough ragan	Surname
t18060416-78-defend847	hannah burke	Surname
t18060521-12-defend144	john obrian	Surname
t18060521-25-defend273	john ryan	Surname
t18060521-28-defend303	margaret obrien	Surname
t18060521-29-defend311	margaret ragan	Surname
t18060521-3-defend73	william conner	Surname
t18060521-31-defend345	thomas haywood	Keyword
t18060521-33-defend360	elizabeth sullivan	Surname
t18060521-34-defend367	james foley	Surname
t18060521-36-defend383	nelly nelly carty	Surname
t18060521-4-defend80	elizabeth kennedy	Surname
t18060521-41-defend427	catherine welch	Surname
t18060521-6-defend92	john flynn	Surname
t18060702-3-defend75	mary ann ryan	Surname
t18060702-32-defend317	martha doyle	Surname
t18060702-50-defend483	edward swinney	Surname
t18060702-63-defend580	ann doyle	Surname
t18060917-123-defend1026	timothy coakley	Surname
t18060917-154-defend1277	mary roach	Surname
t18060917-32-defend263	judith kelly	Surname
t18060917-33-defend265	judith kelly	Surname
t18060917-48-defend442	hannah diana connolly	Surname
t18060917-6-defend60	mary roach	Surname
t18060917-67-defend619	timothy coakley	Surname
t18060917-69-defend634	john odonnell	Surname
t18060917-80-defend767	hannah mccarty	Surname
t18060917-83-defend783	john odonnell	Surname
t18061029-21-defend267	mary daley	Surname
t18061029-23-defend290	charles kelly	Surname
t18061029-4-defend110	cornelius leary	Surname
t18061029-52-defend541	james vaughan	Keyword
t18061029-53-defend576	joseph knight	Keyword
t18061029-7-defend130	james conner	Surname
t18061203-31-defend321	james carty	Surname
t18061203-32-defend326	john andrew nardi	Keyword
t18061203-41-defend456	daniel delworth	Keyword
t18061203-49-defend508	mary sullivan	Surname
t18061203-68-defend677	samuel riley	Surname
t18070114-22-defend339	mary crawley	Surname
t18070114-24-defend398	martin flynn	Surname
t18070114-44-defend581	william castello	Surname
t18070114-60-defend756	john conner	Surname
t18070114-85-defend961	john conner	Surname
t18070114-86-defend973	michael foley	Surname
t18070114-99-defend1062	mary swinney	Surname
t18070218-1-defend52	owen haggerty	Surname
t18070218-13-defend211	cornelius scannell	Surname
t18070218-4-defend128	timothy quin	Surname
t18070218-73-defend770	john mccarty	Surname
t18070218-77-defend795	william connel	Surname
t18070218-86-defend868	john mcdermott	Surname
t18070408-46-defend417	hannah swinney	Surname
t18070408-62-defend546	john mccarthy	Surname
t18070408-77-defend670	elizabeth grady	Surname
t18070408-81-defend692	dennis dempsey	Keyword
t18070408-82-defend760	edward roach	Surname
t18070513-17-defend176	michael nowland	Surname
t18070513-22-defend225	john brown	Keyword



t18070513-33-defend354	eleanor fitzgerald	Surname
t18070513-39-defend416	hannah flynn	Surname
t18070513-43-defend444	margaret sullivan	Surname
t18070513-56-defend540	elizabeth quin	Surname
t18070513-62-defend571	margaret flinn	Surname
t18070701-10-defend122	hannah gorman	Surname
t18070701-19-defend251	margaret bryan	Surname
t18070701-20-defend257	margaret bryan	Surname
t18070701-27-defend314	mary ann mccoy	Surname
t18070701-47-defend529	john buckle	Keyword
t18070701-63-defend669	mary farrell	Surname
t18070701-7-defend102	william lawler	Surname
t18070701-74-defend756	mary murphy	Surname
t18070701-8-defend106	judith lawler	Surname
t18070701-92-defend878	john flynn	Surname
t18070701-97-defend919	jeremiah sullivan	Surname
t18070916-101-defend900	mary hickey	Surname
t18070916-120-defend1038	john cotter	Surname
t18070916-121-defend1048	norah kelly	Surname
t18070916-22-defend211	william obrian	Multiple
t18070916-32-defend332	john mahony	Surname
t18070916-4-defend67	mary duffy	Surname
t18070916-64-defend633	eliza kelly	Surname
t18070916-8-defend109	peter burke	Surname
t18070916-9-defend114	louisa brian	Surname
t18070916-97-defend875	mary mahony	Surname
t18071028-38-defend444	elizabeth burke	Surname
t18071028-40-defend489	margaret kelly	Surname
t18071028-46-defend565	mary ann margaret riley	Surname
t18071028-83-defend845	john sheen	Surname
t18071028-86-defend862	eleanor hickey	Surname
t18071202-16-defend182	lawrence flannagan	Surname
t18071202-17-defend195	lawrence flannagan	Surname
t18071202-19-defend213	arthur keef	Surname
t18071202-26-defend307	elizabeth flinn	Surname
t18071202-32-defend358	thomas welch	Surname
t18071202-38-defend416	mary macnamara	Surname
t18071202-47-defend482	bridget connor	Surname
t18080113-101-defend954	michael flaherty	Surname
t18080113-20-defend222	william roach	Surname
t18080113-36-defend399	sarah fitzgerald	Surname
t18080113-37-defend407	sarah fitzgerald	Surname
t18080113-6-defend84	mary carrol	Surname
t18080113-85-defend826	james carney	Surname
t18080113-99-defend948	thomas darley	Surname
t18080217-55-defend507	philip rian	Surname
t18080217-66-defend589	edward tobin	Surname
t18080217-66-defend591	edmund hickey	Surname
t18080217-69-defend622	john murphy	Surname
t18080406-23-defend227	james burke	Surname
t18080406-38-defend382	mary dolphin	Surname
t18080406-65-defend626	elizabeth fitzgerald	Surname
t18080406-70-defend662	thomas buckley	Surname
t18080406-70-defend664	daniel buckley	Surname
t18080406-75-defend712	cornelius murphy	Surname
t18080601-68-defend574	bartholomew waters	Keyword
t18080601-73-defend613	thomas moran	Surname
t18080713-16-defend206	charles cline	Surname
t18080713-28-defend329	james keefe	Surname

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t18080713-49-defend512	john conolly	Surname
t18080713-51-defend525	sarah delany	Surname
t18080713-53-defend539	william finn	Surname
t18080713-59-defend583	ann ryan	Surname
t18080713-67-defend671	eleanor fitzgerald	Surname
t18080914-108-defend951	hannah job	Keyword
t18080914-126-defend1113	john welch	Surname
t18080914-127-defend1119	john roach	Surname
t18080914-24-defend258	peter cassidy	Surname
t18080914-60-defend549	francis hickey	Surname
t18080914-73-defend662	michael kelly	Surname
t18080914-74-defend669	john connor	Surname
t18080914-94-defend820	joseph dolphin	Surname
t18081126-24-defend237	john finn	Surname
t18081126-49-defend438	ann connolly	Multiple
t18081126-50-defend443	ann connolly	Multiple
t18081126-51-defend449	elizabeth connell	Surname
t18081126-52-defend456	elizabeth connell	Surname
t18081126-69-defend595	ann cline	Surname
t18081130-25-defend252	john flinn	Surname
t18081130-32-defend324	thomas mccarthy	Surname
t18081130-43-defend428	ann downey	Surname
t18081130-44-defend433	john shay	Surname
t18081130-52-defend546	john casey	Surname
t18081130-62-defend613	patrick mcmahon	Surname
t18081130-69-defend668	jane broderick	Surname
t18081130-73-defend699	luke keef	Surname
t18081130-84-defend776	mary mahony	Surname
t18081130-84-defend778	mary conner	Surname
t18090111-34-defend413	dorinda megan	Surname
t18090111-40-defend463	ann downey	Surname
t18090111-68-defend685	michael ryan	Surname
t18090111-75-defend752	mary grimes	Keyword
t18090215-10-defend124	rhody kennedy	Surname
t18090215-28-defend294	catherine sullivan	Surname
t18090215-3-defend60	michael conner	Surname
t18090215-3-defend62	james kelly	Surname
t18090215-36-defend338	luke bartlett	Keyword
t18090215-61-defend526	ann kelly	Surname
t18090215-79-defend717	michael connelly	Surname
t18090412-105-defend933	john welch	Surname
t18090412-38-defend399	eleanor duffy	Surname
t18090412-58-defend582	bryon cavanagh	Surname
t18090412-78-defend747	alexander mcquin	Surname
t18090517-13-defend206	john crawley	Surname
t18090517-33-defend346	margaret madden	Surname
t18090517-35-defend385	margaret madden	Surname
t18090517-64-defend613	thomas mccarthy	Surname
t18090517-79-defend747	mary ryan	Surname
t18090517-79-defend749	eleanor conner	Surname
t18090626-2-defend52	bryan conner	Surname
t18090626-2-defend54	john driscoll	Surname
t18090626-30-defend384	murphy conner	Surname
t18090626-50-defend598	catherine murphy	Surname
t18090626-59-defend702	michael burke	Surname
t18090626-80-defend861	john shee	Surname
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t18090920-129-defend1290	catherine conner	Surname
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t18090920-142-defend1394	elizabeth sullivan	Surname
t18090920-15-defend171	michael murphy	Surname
t18090920-164-defend1572	john sheen	Multiple
t18090920-167-defend1593	joseph dolphin	Surname
t18090920-175-defend1653	catherine clancy	Surname
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t18090920-43-defend400	dominick connolly	Surname
t18090920-46-defend417	mary jordan	Keyword
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t18091101-44-defend386	mary tooney	Surname
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t18091206-16-defend212	mary sullivan	Surname
t18091206-19-defend239	dennis burke	Surname
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t18091206-31-defend315	catherine doyle	Surname
t18091206-47-defend441	thomas dailey	Surname
t18091206-5-defend116	mary conner	Surname
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t18091206-70-defend613	henry crawley	Surname
t18091206-82-defend685	michael haggerty	Surname
t18100110-13-defend135	william connor	Surname
t18100110-71-defend629	thomas bryan	Surname
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t18100221-111-defend1096	ann carrick	Keyword
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t18100221-42-defend478	james casey	Surname
t18100221-44-defend503	martin costello	Surname
t18100221-49-defend549	thomas sheen	Surname
t18100221-6-defend103	john walsh	Surname
t18100221-68-defend758	cristopher kelley	Surname
t18100221-82-defend879	jane flynn	Surname
t18100411-104-defend906	peter flaherty	Surname
t18100411-115-defend987	james kelly	Surname
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t18100411-6-defend96	margaret fitzgerald	Surname
t18100411-78-defend744	john cockran	Keyword
t18100411-81-defend763	john crawley	Surname
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t18100606-111-defend866	elizabeth sullivan	Surname
t18100606-114-defend895	ann barry	Surname
t18100606-119-defend926	james callaghan	Multiple
t18100606-18-defend197	henry molloy	Surname
t18100606-27-defend281	james carney	Surname
t18100606-33-defend335	michael gorman	Multiple
t18100606-38-defend371	michael walsh	Surname
t18100606-50-defend456	ann riley	Surname
t18100606-57-defend495	mary sullivan	Surname
t18100606-65-defend560	william foley	Surname
t18100606-7-defend107	samuel bryan	Surname

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t18100606-88-defend726	mary mahony	Surname
t18100718-15-defend170	lucy foley	Surname
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t18100718-36-defend387	thomas kelly	Surname
t18100718-52-defend546	eleanor swinney	Surname
t18100718-53-defend552	bridget kelly	Surname
t18100718-66-defend671	william cane	Keyword
t18100718-67-defend679	mary callagan	Surname
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t18100919-21-defend219	michael doyle	Surname
t18100919-22-defend229	michael doyle	Surname
t18100919-27-defend267	samuel cocklin	Surname
t18100919-38-defend350	james daley	Surname
t18100919-42-defend380	catharine driscoll	Surname
t18100919-50-defend439	timothy toomey	Surname
t18100919-50-defend441	william barry	Surname
t18100919-51-defend448	eleanor flynn	Surname
t18100919-53-defend473	jeremiah sullivan	Surname
t18100919-59-defend533	george curran	Surname
t18100919-60-defend556	george curran	Surname
t18100919-61-defend561	john nowland	Surname
t18100919-7-defend96	mary hurley	Surname
t18100919-98-defend825	catharine kennedy	Surname
t18100919-98-defend829	margaret kennedy	Surname
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t18101031-106-defend1122	james macarthy	Surname
t18101031-22-defend349	catherine mccarty	Surname
t18101031-24-defend367	thomas kelly	Surname
t18101031-24-defend371	william kelly	Surname
t18101031-38-defend507	michael casey	Surname
t18101031-51-defend627	mary donovan	Surname
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t18101031-79-defend893	margaret driscoll	Surname
t18101031-92-defend979	thomas glynn	Surname
t18101031-93-defend986	thomas glynn	Surname
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t18101205-75-defend775	mary carney	Surname
t18101205-82-defend827	john molloy	Surname
t18101205-87-defend868	james odonald	Keyword
t18101205-89-defend880	stephen regan	Surname
t18101205-94-defend919	matthew sullivan	Surname
t18110109-23-defend258	mihel emanuel	Keyword
t18110109-27-defend297	john doran	Surname
t18110109-29-defend311	margeret molley	Surname
t18110109-37-defend449	mary casey	Surname
t18110109-50-defend568	lawrence welch	Surname
t18110109-60-defend635	michael flynn	Surname
t18110109-62-defend651	mary sullivan	Surname
t18110109-74-defend743	mary ann welch	Surname
t18110109-79-defend776	mary mahoney	Surname
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t18110220-19-defend211	john lawler	Surname

t18110220-26-defend268	daniel kelly	Surname
t18110220-55-defend574	george farrell	Surname
t18110220-7-defend112	john lawler	Surname
t18110403-20-defend208	catherine mccarthy	Multiple
t18110403-26-defend256	ann conner	Surname
t18110403-35-defend328	george doran	Surname
t18110403-40-defend369	catherine roach	Multiple
t18110403-45-defend414	elizabeth farrel	Surname
t18110403-51-defend483	william crawley	Surname
t18110403-68-defend652	matthew murphy	Surname
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t18110529-112-defend921	matthew murphy	Surname
t18110529-119-defend961	john anglin	Surname
t18110529-121-defend973	eleanor welch	Surname
t18110529-124-defend993	jerry shee	Surname
t18110529-135-defend1070	mary curran	Surname
t18110529-25-defend270	michael carney	Surname
t18110529-48-defend428	william conner	Surname
t18110529-73-defend628	john hamerton	Keyword
t18110529-90-defend774	john bryan	Surname
t18110710-13-defend148	george madden	Surname
t18110710-2-defend61	thomas rooney	Surname
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t18110710-89-defend838	ann carrol	Surname
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t18110918-166-defend1225	peter riley	Surname
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t18110918-54-defend428	susannah sullivan	Surname
t18110918-64-defend482	margeret nowland	Surname
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t18110918-86-defend636	thomas long	Keyword
t18110918-87-defend643	john connor	Multiple
t18111030-131-defend1045	daniel cotter	Surname
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t18111030-139-defend1095	mary rynes	Surname
t18111030-15-defend168	mary buckley	Surname
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t18111030-51-defend476	henry crawley	Surname
t18111030-54-defend495	mary hickey	Multiple
t18111030-63-defend556	catherine conner	Surname
t18111030-67-defend589	timothy ragan	Surname
t18111030-84-defend712	michael carrol	Surname
t18111030-9-defend118	mary brian	Multiple
t18111204-14-defend194	timothy obrien	Surname
t18111204-24-defend290	james mccoey	Surname
t18111204-32-defend346	william crawley	Surname
t18111204-43-defend416	john holliham	Keyword

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t18120115-26-defend345	margaret roach	Surname
t18120115-28-defend361	james fitzgerald	Surname
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t18120115-31-defend386	james murphy	Surname
t18120115-38-defend432	dennis oconner	Multiple
t18120115-4-defend99	benjamin walsh	Surname
t18120115-48-defend515	mary carrol	Surname
t18120115-53-defend565	mary ryan	Surname
t18120115-98-defend970	mary murphy	Surname
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t18120219-39-defend393	catherine duffy	Surname
t18120219-75-defend691	michael mccarty	Surname
t18120219-88-defend777	john sullivan	Surname
t18120219-95-defend865	michael sullivan	Surname
t18120408-115-defend1087	charity regan	Surname
t18120408-18-defend198	john daly	Surname
t18120408-31-defend290	thomas flannagan	Surname
t18120408-32-defend300	neil daley	Surname
t18120408-4-defend71	elizabeth burn	Keyword
t18120408-48-defend547	john smith	Keyword
t18120408-62-defend675	edward connolly	Surname
t18120408-92-defend947	william neil	Surname
t18120408-95-defend960	edward obrien	Surname
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t18120513-15-defend195	mary sullivan	Surname
t18120513-26-defend284	mary carthy	Surname
t18120513-38-defend389	john dwyer	Surname
t18120513-41-defend417	isaac nowland	Surname
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t18120513-44-defend469	catherine foster	Keyword
t18120513-53-defend607	john dwyer	Surname
t18120513-76-defend771	ann dwyer	Surname
t18120513-81-defend804	john brannon	Surname
t18120513-82-defend814	frances linch	Surname
t18120701-28-defend324	john casey	Surname
t18120701-68-defend615	christopher kelly	Surname
t18120701-77-defend688	thomas gannon	Surname
t18120701-97-defend812	david kelly	Surname
t18120916-103-defend854	john darcy	Surname
t18120916-115-defend975	elizabeth connolly	Surname
t18120916-140-defend1180	margaret grogan	Surname
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t18120916-22-defend254	william connor	Surname
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t18130113-3-defend69	jane nowland	Surname
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t18130217-94-defend906	thomas sheridan	Surname
t18130217-96-defend920	william mccarthy	Surname
t18130407-143-defend1263	thomas ryan	Surname
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t18130602-165-defend1370	thomas casey	Surname
t18130602-59-defend571	peter patrick ennis	Keyword
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t18130714-111-defend1038	joseph molloy	Surname
t18130714-122-defend1164	ann mahony	Surname
t18130714-128-defend1206	matthew daley	Surname
t18130714-17-defend258	timothy mccarthy	Surname
t18130714-20-defend287	joseph molley	Surname
t18130714-22-defend309	james sullivan	Multiple
t18130714-78-defend829	jeremiah sullivan	Surname
t18130714-79-defend836	mary maloney	Surname
t18130714-83-defend867	mary mccabe	Surname
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t18130915-24-defend257	james coffey	Surname
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t18131027-123-defend1177	martha nagle	Surname
t18131027-135-defend1263	john walsh	Surname
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t18131201-45-defend593	mary macarthy	Surname
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t18131201-76-defend842	james tobin	Surname
t18131201-81-defend868	sarah conner	Surname
t18131201-82-defend874	james welch	Surname
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t18140112-101-defend870	mary newman	Keyword
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t18140216-2-defend57	stephen curran	Surname
t18140216-25-defend258	john brennan	Surname
t18140216-42-defend399	patrick gallagher	Surname
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t18140216-94-defend885	james ayre	Keyword
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t18140420-111-defend1047	ann hagerty	Surname
t18140420-144-defend1256	maria madden	Surname
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t18140420-27-defend296	john lynch	Multiple
t18140420-41-defend405	john crawley	Surname
t18140420-54-defend519	margaret bryan	Surname
t18140420-61-defend602	edmund burke	Surname
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t18140420-81-defend806	john sullivan	Surname
t18140420-92-defend902	patrick oneal	Surname
t18140525-14-defend162	john hickey	Surname
t18140525-15-defend164	john hickey	Surname
t18140525-23-defend242	dennis mahony	Surname
t18140525-3-defend61	mary dunn	Keyword
t18140525-3-defend63	mary leonard	Keyword
t18140525-5-defend79	thomas welsh	Multiple
t18140525-55-defend500	john byrne	Surname
t18140525-76-defend748	ann riley	Surname
t18140525-82-defend794	william kelly	Surname
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t18140706-104-defend863	john connolly	Surname
t18140706-106-defend874	john ryan	Surname
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t18140706-124-defend994	henry madden	Surname
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t18141026-123-defend1064	catherine conner	Surname
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t18141026-94-defend873	james mcdermot	Surname
t18141130-10-defend165	robert crone	Surname
t18141130-109-defend1029	susannah welch	Surname
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t18201206-95-defend964	henry tobin	Surname

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